Wednesday, September 9, 2009 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 273 P10

Survivors recount miracles

THE RESCUE OF NEARLY ALL OF THE more than 900 people aboard the sunken SuperFerry 9—except for the nine who perished—was nothing short of a miracle in this nation that is no stranger to major sea disasters.

Some of the survivors were more blessed than others—like Luigi Domingo, 20, who jumped overboard as the ferry began keeling over before dawn Sunday off the coast of Zamboanga del Norte.

Domingo's life jacket was ripped off his body as he hit the water. "Thank God it just floated by where I surfaced from the waters," he said.

As he was floating with other survivors with life vests on, his stomach

SURVIVORS A2

Mikey Arroyo: My wife made me richer NEWS / A3

Forex reserves hit record high $41.3B BUSINESS / B1

A tale of two churches: Betis and Bolinao ACROSS / A16

SSS files complaint against TV host METRO / A21

15 RP films off to international film festivals ENTERTAINMENT / E1

GROUNDED SuperFerry 5 sails into the Eva Macapagal terminal in Manila on Tuesday carrying some survivors of the ill-fated SuperFerry 9 that sank off Zamboanga del Norte on Sunday. The Aboitiz's SuperFerry vessels are expected to remain in port until the government lifts the suspension order. AP/LYNNDEE

Lakas-Kampi-CMD in peril

Aboitiz contests suspension order

By Kristine L. Alave

THE OWNER OF THE $2-PATED SuperFerry 9 is fighting a government suspension order, saying it was like "putting the cart before the horse."

Several vessels of the Aboitiz Transport System Corp. plied their normal routes yesterday, a day after the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) grounded one of the country's largest shipping lines following Sunday's sinking of its ferry.

Aboitiz said Marina's "show cause" suspension order on Monday was only received yesterday at its Cebu City headquarters after the vessels had sailed.

In a motion for reconsideration filed yesterday, Aboitiz said it was unfair for Marina to suspend its operations without

ABOITIZ A4

PHILATELISTS' DELIGHT Philippine Postal Corp. is issuing a limited edition of 70,000 postage stamps in honor of the late former President Corazon Aquino. The stamps will go on sale for ₱7 each after the ceremonial unveiling at the Edsa Shrine on Tuesday. (Story on Page A4) GERVACIO

Gag order issued to Chavit, Che

By Julie M. Aurelio, Christine V. Esguerra and Alcuin Papa

GUILTY LIE

A Quezon City family court has barred the camps of Deputy National Security Adviser Luis "Chavit" Singson and his former live-in partner Rachel "Che" Thompson from giving interviews to media regarding the civil case Thompson has filed.

Judge Angelene Mary Quimpo-Sale of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 106 issued the gag order yesterday during a closed-door hearing on Thompson's petition for a temporary protection order against Singson.

GAG ORDER A6

Rapist misled DOJ, says victims' mom

By Jhannox Napallacan in Cebu City and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila

CEBU CITY—THE RAPE CONvict approved to serve the rest of his life sentence in a penal facility in Spain under a prisoner exchange treaty had misled the Department of Justice (DOJ) into thinking that he had fulfilled his legal obligations, according to the mother of his victims.

Thelma Chiong said the family of convict Francisco Juan "Paco" Larrañaga had yet to indemnify her family the amount ordered by the court for the July 1997 abduction, rape and killing of her daughters Jacqueline and Marijoy.

Chiong said she learned only recently that Larrañaga, through his lawyers, claimed to have paid her family the court-specified amount of ₱750,000 for about 12,500 euros in moral damages.

"The news that came out in Spanish newspapers was that they had paid [12,500 euros] to the Chiong family. Who got the money, the government? Surely not us," the mother said in Cebuano.

If the payment of damages was one of the bases for the petition to transfer Larrañaga to a prison in Spain, then his family misled the DOJ into issuing its approval, Chiong said.

As it happened, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago told reporters in Manila that the DOJ erred when it processed Larrañaga's petition for transfer

RAPIST A10

FVR, JDV lead 50 members in revolt

By Lala B. Salaverria

THE MUCH-BALLYhooed merger appears to be in trouble.

Staking a claim to the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, 50 "original" members of the party led by former President Fidel Ramos banded together yesterday to protest its "marriage" to the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), and said they would coalesce with other major political parties to field their own standard-bearers.

The 50 Lakas members also passed a resolution reaffirming Ramos as the party's chair emeritus, Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia as its president, and others as its duly elected officers, according to De Venecia, who lost the speakership last year when he fell out of grace with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

De Venecia said the 50 were the last officials legally elected by the party in March 2008, and that Ms Arroyo's subsequent appointments of other officers were invalid.

For his account, De Venecia heads a newly formed executive

LAKAS-KAMPI-CMD A2

CRUZ: Outspoken critic of the President

VELUSAS: Lingayen-Dagupan after Edsa and Bataan

Bishop Cruz retires; successor Bishop Soc youngest archbishop

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

BALANGA BISHOP SOCRATES "SOC" VILLEGAS, who turns 49 on Sept. 26, will take the place of Archbishop Oscar Cruz as head of the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan, making him the country's youngest archbishop.

Cruz, one of the more outspoken critics of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the Catholic Church hierarchy, has retired, the Vatican announced last night.

Cruz, 74, had applied for early retirement as head of the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan two years ago.

BISHOP CRUZ A4

Sen. Lito L wants to be gov again

By Charlene Cayabyab Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid yesterday announced that he was returning to Pampanga politics and run for governor in the next election.

Lapid, whose first term in the Senate ends in 2010, said he was more comfortable serving his province than

SEN. LITO A5

House body OKs tax on text messages, eyes ₱36B

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

CONGRESS MOVED CLOSER to getting a bigger slice of the profits of telecommunication firms after a committee of the House of Representatives approved yesterday a bill seeking to impose a five-centavo excise tax on every text, picture, and video and audio clip sent through mobile phones.

The proposed tax is expected to generate between P20 billion and P36 billion a year for the government. Nearly 70 million prepaid subscribers nationwide send on the average at least 10 text messages a day.

Antipas Rep. Exequiel Javier, chair of the ways and means committee, said majority of the House members gave the green light to a proposed tax on text under House Bill No. 6628 without the "no pass-on provision" being insisted on by its author, Davao Sur Rep. Eric Singson.

Singson wanted the tax to be borne exclusively by mobile phone providers.

Javier told reporters that Congress could not bar telecommunications firms from passing on the tax to consumers.

A short message service (SMS) costs at least P1 and a multimedia message service (MMS) at least P10.

"It's very hard to put a no

HOUSE A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: A low pressure area (LPA) was estimated based on satellite and radar data at 220 km East of Guiuan City. Latest weather observation and satellite images and Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) radar data still indicate...

Baguio	Partly cloudy	Butuan City	Cloudy with showers
Dagupan City	Partly cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with showers
Laoag	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with showers
Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Iloilo City	Mostly cloudy
Legazpi	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly cloudy
Cebu City	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga City	Mostly cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

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EZ2 (Tuesday's results)
26 18 4 27 14 19

SIX DIGIT (Tuesday's results)
1 3 4 6 8 8

SUERTRES (2PM draw)
2 4 6
(5PM draw)
5 9 7
(9PM draw)
7 0 5

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN
3 7 10 16 18 26
P10,572,809.40

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
23 25 31 32 44 45
P25,387,423.20

Ping vows to unmask Erap

Mar convinced Noynoy will run; Erap says he's open to 'unity' talks

By Carla P. Gomez and Nestor Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas, and Philip C. Tubeza

BACOLOD CITY—SEN. MANUEL Roxas II yesterday said he is convinced that Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III will run for president in 2010.

"Noynoy said he will not run for him on the fight Cory and Mitoy started," Roxas pointed out, but added he did not want to pre-empt Aquino's eventual announcement.

A confident told Aquino will announce his candidacy for the presidency today at the Club Filipino, the same venue where his late mother, Corazon Aquino, took her oath as president in 1986.

Roxas, who was one of the rushes to announce his plan to seek the presidency last week gave up his ambition and pledged to Aquino, saying the fight for 2010 was a fight for the country and even beyond personalities.

Aquino, who has gone on a spiritual retreat in Zamboanga City has said he would be announcing his decision before the end of this month even as his supporters continue to gather the signatures that they hope would convince him to run.

Roxas said he is supporting Aquino for president because he sees in him the chance to unite the forces fighting for reforms and good governance.

"Noynoy is very prepared. I have high respect for him. He will not run with the main name of his parents. What is important is his ability to stand to do what is right," he said.

Members of the Aquino clan, including those serving in the Aquino administration, will rally behind Noynoy if he decides to run, Aquino "Kuya" Aquino, a former senator and congressman, said yesterday.

"But this will be united behind Noynoy if he decides to run, Bali said.

He said he expects family members who are in the administration—like his sister Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, mother former senator who now chairs the Early Childhood Care and Development Council, and another sister Lupita Aquino-Kashiwahara, who is President Macapagal-Arroyo's image consultant—to also support Noynoy.

"If that is his decision I'm sure we will all rally behind him," Bam said expecting in a chance interview at the Manila Peninsula hotel.

No rush

But he said Noynoy should not be rushed into a decision.

"He's taking a very serious challenge. I think he should be given all the time to consider what he's going to do," said Bali, a younger brother of Noynoy's father, the murdered opposition leader Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr.

"He's praying for guidance. I think that is a good sign," he added.

Bali, who is a member of the opposition PDP-Laban party, said he also supports opposition unity talks so that they can field a common candidate for president.

"What's important is that the people are sending good government, an honest government, a government they can trust. I think there's also talk

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"Noynoy is very prepared. I have high respect for him. He will not run with the main name of his parents. What is important is his ability to stand to do what is right," he said.

By Christine O. Avendaño

ASIDE FROM TELLING WHAT he knows about the abduction and killing of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito, Sen. Rodolfo Lacson said yesterday he would also reveal who former President Joseph Estrada was on a leader, with elections just around the corner.

Lacson vowed to tell the truth about three new subjects when he delivers his privilege speech in the Senate on Sept. 14.

Asked whether his revelations about Estrada had something to do with the latter's alleged involvement in the 2000 double murder, Lacson said: "I'm not saying that. I will just tell what I know. I will not reveal or speculate."

Pressed again on whether Estrada already stole mile the senator's former police aides who are now facing charges for the murder of Dacer and Corbito, he told reporters to just wait for his privilege speech.

'I'll prove it'

"I will say what I need to say on Monday. I will not lie. I will tell the truth and I will answer," he said.

Lacson earlier told the Inquirer that his revelations about the Dacer-Corbito case stem from an investigation he conducted on the case "for my personal consumption."

He said he was delivering the speech on these and "other matters" out of his opposition to the "vilification" campaign against him by the government.

Lacson had repeatedly denied having a hand in the killing of Dacer and Corbito after his former police aides—Michael Ray Aquino, Cesar Mancao II and Glen Dumlao—were charged with the murders.

The double murder case is now being heard by a Manila regional trial court and the Department of Justice, which reopened the case after Mancao issued an affidavit implicating Lacson and Estrada in the killings.

The former president had also denied having a hand in the murders.

Erap as a leader

Yesterday, Lacson said he thought of revealing what kind of leader Estrada was, because he had served under him.

Lacson was the chief of the Philippine National Police during the two years of the Estrada administration.

"I will just describe (Estrada) be-

LACSON

cause 2010 is nearing and this might be relevant so that people would have good information about who Joseph Estrada is as a government official," he said.

"I will not even touch on the personal aspect of his person, just his being a government official," Lacson added.

Estrada was ousted in January 2001 after a mass of people power uprising. He was accused of accepting bribes from operators of the illegal numbers game, Jueteng.

The former president was convicted of plunder by the Sandiganbayan in 2007 but was promptly pardoned by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Another source

Asked why Estrada was making movements against him recently, Lacson said it was not only Erap's camp that was making those movements but another source whom he said was taking advantage of the situation. He did not name the source.

Meanwhile, Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada said he would have briefed Lacson would have to say about his bubby.

The youngest Estrada said it would depend on what Lacson would say whether he would react. He said he could respond to Lacson's speech on the floor either by himself during or delivering a privilege speech.

He told reporters he saw "shadow" about what Lacson had to say as he reiterated that the Estrada family had nothing to do with the abduction and killing of Dacer and Corbito.

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MIKEY ARROYO INTERVIEW

'My wife made me richer'

By Gil Cabacungan

THE EBRAHTILED ELDER SON OF PRESIdent Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday countered with new documents showing that his personal fortune soared in 2002 after he married control of tax-aid, rich family.

Prosecutors Rep. Amo Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo's purchased a supplemental Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) that his lawyer filed in his behalf in August 2003, more than a year after his wedding in Manila Metropolis, to dispel allegations he had enriched himself in office.

Arroyo said he made a mistake when he underlined the spike in his wealth to the wedding presents and prospective retirement benefits he received when he ran for Congress in 2004.

"I feel there has been a lot of misunderstanding about the statements I made during my appearance on GMA TV 'Unang Hirit'", due to my inability to cope with the repetitive questioning of [unintelligible] Mikey said. I respect him and though her questioning [unintelligible] I respect him and though her questioning [unintelligible] I respect him and though her questioning [unintelligible]

Reds offer 3-step plan to restart peace talks

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—THE COMMUNIST National Democratic Front (NDF) has made three proposals to its government counterpart in the peace negotiations to save the talks from impending collapse.

In a statement issued Tuesday, NDF spokesperson Fidel V. Agcaoili said that, first, the two parties must meet in Oslo by the end of September and come up with an agreement on complying with the Joint Order Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees) and then immediately convene any interim agreement to the release of relief packets promised by the accord.

The Joint—suspended in September 2005 after the NDF withdrew from the peace talks but which—was re-issued last July in preparation for their resumption—allows for the free movement of communist leaders during the peace negotiations.

Instead, Agcaoili said immediately after signing the agreement, the two sides should agree on the dates and agenda for the preparatory meeting and formal talks in Oslo in November.

Lastly, during the meeting and talks, rebels could occur in Inverness, Agcaoili proposed the two panels reaffirm all bilateral agreements, particular negotiations on social and economic reforms, and implement the Cadre(s) (Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law).

The NDF is the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, which has been waging a protracted war against the government for the past 40 years.

Agcaoili denied being responsible for the scuttling of the peace talks, blaming Presidential Peace Adviser Avelino Razon instead.

He said the government could not say it was "ignorant" about talks, because while attending the same breath that it would crush the armed rebellion.

The NDF had demanded the government dismiss criminal charges against certain rebel leaders and release others from jail so they could serve in peaceful and consultants in the talks.

Razon countered that the NDF demands as "unreasonable" and pointed out the communist leaders were facing criminal charges and were the subject of arrest warrants.

Forgiveness is a gift

I recently came across a column, "Medical File" by Robert Castillo (PDI, August 22, 2009) which is worth pondering about for it is a virtue many people may have forgotten.

Let me quote part of the article:

"Forgiveness is a gift one gives the offender, but psychotherapists say that it is more a gift to the one who gives it than to the one it is given to. Unforgiving bitterness only results in more serious negative impact, not only on the mental health of one who harbors it, but even on their physical health. A more depressed immune system has been observed in these individuals making them more prone to cancers, infections and other diseases.

"It's easier said than done, but forgiveness can be so liberating to the soul. It does not mean that sins or vicious crimes should be forgiven and forgotten. The offender(s) should still be made to pay for their offenses. The aggrieved persons, should however make the decision to move forward, and let go of the hurting feelings and emotions.

"Forgiveness removes all the negative emotions associated with cruel beginning. When one does not forgive and continues to hold onto the pain of an injustice done, one allows the past injustice to continue to hurt him or her".

Mr. Rafael Castillo wrote about the atrocities of Auschwitz I and II where the largest of the Nazi Germany's concentration camps in Oswiecim, Poland, are located and where the genocidal nightmare took place. Millions of Jews were either sent to the gas chambers tortured to death and executed in cruel manners.

"We should never forget Auschwitz. Daily, all over the world, smaller version of Auschwitz repeats itself, with every incident of police brutality and torture, or salvaging. So as we forgive, we should not necessarily forget, lest history repeats itself", Castillo further stated.

As the "yellow movement" intensifies once again, there is a need to assess ourselves as to who we truly are.

The vilification and hate campaigns against President Arroyo comes to mind of many including me. Why is it so intense? It is no different from the hatred the Nazis had towards the Jews.

There are people who, I think, feel that they own this country; that others no longer have the right to express an opinion, much less differ from them.

It has puzzled me for years past how some people could put blame on a person without looking at themselves or their inner being. There is such a thing as overdoing it to the point of being unreasonable. This yellow ribbon thing should have ended when Marcos fled the country. But to this day it still remains.

Do we have to keep fighting each other? I've learned to allow their ulterior ego for what it does to our people. Together with the yellow ribbons, it symbolizes disunity, divisiveness, hatred and anger. And if you don't belong to the "yellow brigade", you're as noticed as if they alone have the monopoly to goodness, like special creatures of some kind.

The "yellow" has become like a detergent to cleanse themselves, but not even muriatic acid can disinfect, and sanitize or remove the sins they have committed in the past.

As Marichu Villanueva in her column, ("Commonsense", Philippines Star, August 21/09) said which to me is an accurate reading of the present situation: "...an over-focus on Arroyo could trigger a counter-reaction that opposition bets could be using her to endear even the issues that could hound them".

That Arroyo-bashing is a diversionary tactic aimed to keep them out of major public scrutiny.

For the Aquino family to object at President Arroyo's gesture of paying her last respects to an ex-president Cory, for the family's refusal to give Cory a state burial- for Noynoy and his sisters to slam the order of President Arroyo to build a monument of their parents in Manila's Rizal Park as "useless, if this new building it does not follow the advocacy of the person to whom the monument is dedicated". Big words indeed!

I've served the Aquino government for six years, helped her in her hours of need after Ninoy's assassination, risking my life and family business interests in memory of a childhood friend. I, too, know what happened in the Aquino administration and it also had much to be desired. It was far from being perfect but we felt up to consideration of what the family went through. But that does not mean that we have to bear it for the rest of our lives, or forever. Forgiveness has to take place sooner than later or we can never move forward in this country.

There is no one on this earth who has not shed and a beloved I, too, have lost the people I most loved in my life ____, my father and mother. But I honored their passing away as children by as I could knowing that no one else can possibly feel the pain more than I, and together with my siblings, I reasonably accorded all public duty and attention to grace my deep grieving of loss.

Yes, they were not Ninoy and Cory, but to me they were greater and more honorable than anyone else in my life.

The solution to what ails this country cannot possibly rest on two people alone but on each and everyone of us. We as a people need a change of heart if this land that belongs to all of us and not to a selected few is to survive.

I prayed for Cory in the coolness of my private chapel, had masses said for her and asked God to extend my forgiveness for the difference in opinion we have had in the past.

I did not go to her wake for fear of suffering rejection like President Arroyo did because I am for Charter Change. Cory labeled those who were for charter change as being "mga walanghiya" in her message read in a rally in Makati by one of her grandsons, and for some other reasons that happened in 1987 onwards.

Sorry Cory. I, too, have a mind of my own that I won't allow anyone to dominate.

Yan ang tuney na demokrasya.

Some might question my writing this column within this "forty day" period; but when one has served God well, she must have gone straight to heaven. The "forty days" applies only to sinners and ordinary mortals for that's the time their spirits still roam the earth before going to the Great Beyond.

But the "yellow" Corytes are the ones alarming me for using her death to desecrate their past without respecting the "forty day" period. Not even the "nine day" period was honored by them. From day one of her passing on August 1, the Labor sign, the yellow ribbons and streamers were already "screaming" on the streets with anger, mute faces plastered on the television screens asking God to save them rather than the dead they were supposed to be paying homage to.

Thank God I was not the one in that coffin or I would have kicked their asses out of their wits.

They showed disrespect to Cory. All that show reduced the respect and solemnity that she deserved, all in the name of politics.

Let's be real. The Corytes are not special people. Like the rest of us, they too have something to reckon with.

It is said that the color yellow as kulay daw ng mga selosa at inggitera. Handle those yellow flags with care. Don't banter them with anger; always remembering that our National Flag, the red, white and blue is the symbol of the needed unity of all Filipinos in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Manuel L. Morato

More rains in Metro

By Alexis Pays

RESIDENTS OF METRO MANILA and other parts of Luzon should expect more rain in the next three days, the Philippine atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said yesterday.

Romel Victor, Pagasa weather forecaster, said a low pressure area enhancing the southwest monsoon would bring rains in the next two to three days.

Areas likely to be affected, he said, include Central and Southern Luzon and Western Visayas.

"We will have moderate to heavy rains in these areas, especially the western sections of these areas," he said.

According to Pagasa's 5 p.m. update, the low-pressure area was spotted 150 kilometers west of Iloilo City.

There is no tropical cyclone within the country's area of responsibility.

Pagasa will also have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. Mildly cloudy to mostly cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Corrections

IN THE SEPT. 3 ISSUE, a photo caption on Page A13 misstated the first name of Bobby Dacer's driver. His name is Reynaud—not Alvin.—Carlos

IN THE SEPT. 4 ISSUE, caption on Page B4 of Business Friday misspelled the acronym of ATI commercial division. It's name is AAF Broadcast—not Broadcast.

IN THE SEPT. 5 ISSUE, the credit for a front-page photo of Rachel "Che" Daoagan was inadvertently omitted. The photo came from ABS-CBN.

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a photo caption on Page A2 misstated the name of a Quezon City councilor. His name is Jorge "Boboi" Banal III.—not John Banal.

IN THE SEPT. 6 ISSUE, a Metro story on Page A20 misspelled the first name of the San Juan mayor. His name is Joseph—not Jospeh—Victor Ejercito.

IN THE SEPT. 7 ISSUE, an article on Page A2—It first cites a Noynoy hand-off"—misstated the place where the Balitaan sa Tinapayan forum was held on Sept. 6. The forum was held in Manila—not Rizal.

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a Business article on Page B3—"PF started to control of pump-priming efforts"—erroneously referred to Dominique Jerome Kuhn, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, as a she. He uses Kahn's name.

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors involving (a) the Daily Inquirer, Daily Inquirer, 888 Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yakal Street, Makati City, fax No. (63-2) 896-2963, e-mail address: dailyinq@inquirer.com.ph.

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The Daily Gospel

Wednesday, September 9, 2009
23rd Week in Ordinary Time
Priest Color

1st Reading: Col 1:1-11
Gospel: Lk 6:20-26

Lifting up his eyes on his disciples, Jesus said,
"Blessed are you who are poor, the kingdom of God is yours.
"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be filled.
"Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.
"Blessed are you when people hate you, when they reject you and revile you and slander you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for a great reward is kept for you in heaven. Remember that is how the ancestors of this people treated the prophets.
"But woe for you who have wealth, for you have been consoled once.
"Woe for you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.
"Woe for you when everybody says well of you, for that is how the ancestors of these people treated the false prophets."

Commentary:

If you woke up this morning with more health than sickness; you are more blessed than the millions, who won't survive the week. If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of nearly million people around the world. If you can read without moving your lips, you are more blessed than billions of people in the world. If you have sufficient food, clothing and a roof over your head, you are richer than three-quarters of this world's population.

If your parents are married and still alive, you are even very among the children of today's world. If you can hold your head up with a smile on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed, because many can, but most do not. If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or touch them on the shoulder, you are blessed because you can offer God's healing touch. If you can read this reflection offering, then you are more blessed than over two billion people, who cannot read anything at all. You are, indeed, blessed in ways you have never even dreamt.

GMA wants growth target raised to 4%

By TJ Burgonio

WITH THE GLOBAL RECESSION SETTING up out, President Macapagal-Arroyo is considering raising the economy's growth forecast for 2010 to 4 percent.

"The global crisis is not over, but the worst is over," said Augusto Santos, acting director general of National Economic Development Authority.

The latest (Nedal) 2.6 to 3.6 percent growth forecast a little bit on the low side. She feels that it can grow faster so if proved," Santos said in a media briefing yesterday.

Santos said he presented an analysis of the economic situation at yesterday's regular Cabinet meeting held at the Palace of Independence and Department main office in Intramuros, Manila.

Mr. Arroyo, an economist, then instructed the Development Budget Coordinating Committee to consider raising the growth forecast.

The Nomura Securities International Inc., citing stable remittance inflows and high levels of government spending, had forecast 3.7 percent growth this year and 5.1 percent next year.

Santos added that the upcoming 2010 national elections would also perk up the economy.

"It's like this. In the 2007 elections, we undertook an initiative. Spending in elections constituted .24 percent of the GDP (gross domestic product). And since this is going to be a presidential elections, there's a tendency to spend more," he told reporters.

Santos also said Neda had advised Malacañang to reduce the economic stimulus package by some P50 billion in 2010, saying growth would be spurred by increased consumer spending.

PhilPost issues limited edition Cory stamps

By DJ Yap

A LIMITED-EDITION STAMP honoring the Aquinos of democracy was made available for the first time yesterday by the latter-wielding public and collectors alike.

Philippine Postal Corp. (PhilPost) launched the postage stamp in honor of the late former President at the Edsa Shrine after the mass Mass.

The launching coincided with the birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

PhilPost said it would be releasing only 70,000 pieces of the 30-peso stamps, or two pieces of stamps that are joined together but bearing different designs.

Postmaster General Hector B.R. Villacorta said he hoped the stamps would serve as a "permanent reminder" to current and future generations of Filipinos of Aquino's invaluable contributions to the country.

"Cory Aquino stamps will serve as a fitting tribute to her achievements before her in obituary when she led the 1986 People Power Revolution, as well as the freedom and democracy that we regained during her tenure," he said in a statement.

This is the fourth stamp honoring Aquino's image issued by PhilPost. The first "Cory stamps" were released when she assumed office as president in 1986.

Ricky Asuncion-Abellada, second daughter of Aquino, led the ceremonial unveiling of the stamps in a simple ceremony at the Edsa Shrine.

Bam Aquino, nephew of Aquino and executive director of the Benigno Aquino Jr. Foundation, also attended the ceremony.

Some 400 pieces of first-day-cover envelopes were presented as a special gift to the late Aquino family by PhilPost officials.

During the ceremony, Rhoselle Goquinlan, whose photograph of President Aquino was used in the stamp, said University of the Philippines Diliman professor Marco Ruben Tenazo Mabini II, who helped design the stamp, were recognized for their contributions.

Aboitiz contests suspension order

By [illegible]

hearing to rule.

"Respondents before considering a show cause explanation to putting the suit before the hearing," the company said.

Manila should "create explanation or answer of the respondents before any assertion is imposed," the motion said.

Nine people died in the predawn disaster in late months at sea Zamboanga del Norte while the 7,000-ton ferry was en route from Bacolod-Negros City to Cebu City, but all the others were rescued.

Formal inquiry

The cause of the disaster is being investigated.

The Cebu-based Aboitiz Lines also was grounded after the ferry the Princess of the Stars sank last year off Romblon during a typhoon, leaving 800 people dead.

Marina scheduled a formal inquiry into SuperFerry 9 tragedy on Sept. 15. A separate probe by the Special Board of Marine Inquiry is set to begin either Friday or Monday.

In its motion, Aboitiz urged Marina to allow four ships in its fleet of 10 vessels that had recently undergone inspection and its dock maintenance to remain in service.

"Simply stated, any deficiency in one vessel could result to the grounding of another vessel which is undoubtedly unwarranted, grossly punishing and unfair," Aboitiz said.

"It would be inimical to public interest to suspend other duly licensed and certificated vessels which have nothing to do with the incident at all," Aboitiz said.

CONTAINER BOX floats in the sea as SuperFerry 9 begins to sink in the waters off the Zamboanga Peninsula on Sunday. This photo was released by the Philippine Air Force 505th Search and Rescue Squadron based at the 3rd Air Division in Zamboanga City. AFP/505TH SRS

Marina allowed three Aboitiz vessels to sail to Manila after the suspension order reached them at sea, but they will be grounded on arrival, according to Marina officers to change Mayon Cebu.

Coast Guard to enforce order

Philippine Coast Guard commandant Wilfredo Tamayo said he had issued orders to enforce Marina's suspension directive on Aboitiz ships.

"We will not allow them to leave, if they persist, we will impound them and refer them to Marina for appropriate action," Tamayo said.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Aboitiz officers in charge Samuel R. Cabrales said that all the people aboard the SuperFerry 9 had been accounted for.

He denied reports that the ferry was overloaded, pointing out it has a capacity of 1,120.

He said the vessel, cleared to sail by the Coast Guard station in Dumaguete station, carried 166 twenty-foot equivalent units of cargo, well below its capacity of 288.

"There was no explosion, smoke or fire. The hull of the ferryboat 9 was intact, there was no water ingress," Cabrales said.

He said Aboitiz had arranged for all required assistance for the survivors and relatives of the fatalities as mandated by law.

Cash can't cover losses

Aboitiz gave each survivor ₱13,000 in assistance and said they would be entitled to ₱50,000 in insurance coverage if the company was found to be at fault.

Some survivors complained the assistance grant was too small to cover losses.

Levi Bajao, a marine deck officer who is an offshore drilling contingency in Malaysia, said he lost his ₱646,000 cell phone worth ₱20,000, cash of ₱180,000 and documents which would cost him around ₱50,000 to replace.

"Will we be compensated for those losses?" Bajao asked.

The companies also said it had consulted oil experts from Shell Philippines who assured them that the fuel oil aboard the vessel did not pollute probably into its fuel tanks.

"There is approximately 220 tons of this fuel onboard. A small oil sheen of the closest fuel type was spotted from the air," Cabrales said.

Companies with oil booms had been contracted to handle the slick with chemical oil dispersants, he said.

Floating container vans

"Some container vans have floated and are now in the process of being recovered by tugboats to be towed away from the neighborhood lanes," Cabrales said.

The Coast Guard has sent a vessel to the area to monitor the situation and to prevent pollution, Tamayo said.

"We have a vessel there with antipollution equipment and supplies," he said.

Tamayo also said sovereign fund boats issued to seafarers to avoid 14 cargo vans floating in the vicinity of the sunken ferry perform it.

"They should avoid them. It could be dangerous for them at night," he said. INQ Alisa T. Gil, chronicler, and Xander Bargen Jr., inquirer Mindanao

Survivors recount miracles at sea

By [illegible]

began growling. It occurred to him that he had not eaten the night before.

Grace from God

Nelu, there was a bunch of [illegible] that moment "to have accompanied us so we floated with the current," said Dominguez, who was interviewed by the Inquirer aboard the SuperFerry 9 that brought some survivors to Manila.

"It was grace from God," said Dominguez, who said he was not expecting to survive, "only pretending to try my very best." He had texted his mother [illegible], asking her to "pray for me."

For 39-[illegible] Samuel Bonifel, a seaman from the Coast Guard, it was the second time he survived a sea disaster. He was one of the survivors of the 1987 Bachjan, which sank off Roxas Marinduque during a typhoon on Sept. 22, 1987.

Bonifel, who has been in service for 20 years and has two children, told he has become superstitious about the incident he had received, which happened several his birthday. He is turning 40 on Sept. 19.

Bonifel was one of the last men to jump off the sinking ferry. He said he and several others saw [illegible] rescue boat [illegible] swimming others for. [illegible] was able to leave the boat, which were under at around 10 a.m.

Not after I jumped, the ship [illegible] a.m. to take their meals and swim.

'You couldn't walk straight'

"After 15 minutes, the ship tilted in such a way that you couldn't walk straight," he said in [illegible] hearing.

Bonifel said he heard no explosion before the ferry started to tilt.

"There was no noise," he said. "There was no power failure," he added, although the lights flickered once.

Reports received by the Coast Guard said that some passengers found a food [illegible] the vessel listed, that the hull was damaged and that water had rushed in and caused [illegible] problems.

Bonifel said he did not see water coming in from below.

Frightened passengers spilled into the hallways and decks and he heard the captain announce to the passengers to wear their life vests. By 5:30 a.m., the captain announced the abandon ship order.

"Some men jumped off to the life rafts. The women were crying. They didn't want to leave the boat," he said.

The first to get off the vessel were women and children. Bonifel said some passengers helped their fellow travelers [illegible] were already using others for. and was able to leave the boat, which were under at around 10 a.m.

Not after I jumped, the ship [illegible] sank," he said.

Pushed to one side

Another see member, 39-[illegible] Leon Jaen, 35, said the ferry started to sink and tilt heavily around 5 a.m., just as he was leaving his [illegible] at the ship's dining hall.

"The glass and plate was sliding... I had to hang on to them while I was eating," Jaen said.

"Then when we were walking out of the dining salon, it's like we were being pushed to one side. The ship was already listing, it was already uneven," he said.

Jaen said he did not notice anything irregular when the ship left Dumaguete City on Saturday.

"The weather was fine, the ship was level when it left port," he said in Filipino.

"Maybe the arrangement of the cargo was not proper... In my years as seaman, I can say maybe one side of the ship was heavier than the other side, or it could be the current," Jaen said in Camp Crame.

Cash in her pocket

Another Surtsunami survivor was Jeanneville Lito Cornelison, 39, who was found holding a white jacket about 13 kilometers from where the 7,200-ton SuperFerry 9 sank.

Rico Aden, Alex Pinion, who helped supervise the rescue, called it "a miracle."

"She has been drifting since huge waves for a long time without any food or water," Pinion said.

Although she was weak and could hardly speak due to a sore throat, Cornelison was upbeat and joked with reporters in a military hospital in Zamboanga city, telling them she had left money at sea but found two small cash in her pocket after her rescue.

"I just prayed. I thought of my family," she said.

Military assets

The passing cargo and seafarers ships noticed her then an hour after receiving a Coast Guard emergency call for assistance, aside Sunday's search happens.

Aboard her James Jaen, two military ships were guided by two OV-10 bombing planes and two Huey helicopters arrived and began to pluck survivors from the ferry and the sea, said the regional military commander, Maj. Gen. Benjamin De Jesus.

"When our assets arrived, people were floating everywhere," De Jesus said, adding the military assembled a 3-kilometer radius from the sinking ferry.

"The presence of many military assets in the area was a big factor," he said. With reports from Kristine L. Alave, Tarra Quismundo and Ryan D. Rosauro, Inquirer Mindanao and AP

LITA CASUMLAM, the last of the ferry survivors, is hoisted by an Air Force rescuer after helming in the dark-tethered waters off Zamboanga del Norte for more than 36 hours. Casumlam, 39, wearing a life jacket, was spotted by rescuers from the Philippine Air Force 505th Search and Rescue Squadron based at the 3rd Air Division in Zamboanga City. AFP/505TH SRS

House body OKs tax on text messsages to raise ₱36B

By [illegible]

passion provision because it is an indirect tax. [A tax is part of the] cost of doing business. You have to pass it on to whoever the business will be losing," Arroyo said.

But Speaker Prospero Nograles maintained that the House would muscle that the tax on SMS and MMS would not be passed on to subscribers.

"It is very clear that based on our previous hearings, there is no need to increase the cost of the short messaging system service of our telcos because the 5% per text that is already being charged from consumers is more than enough to cover the five-centavo tax for each text," Nograles said in a text message to reporters.

Real cost of text message

He said the real cost of each text message was only 25 centavos.

"It is my position that [the proposed additional tax cannot will be borne by the service providers and that the consumers will not be paying additional costs for texting," Nograles said.

Other lawmakers will have their chance to give their views on the bill when it goes to the plenary for floor debates, according to Arroyo.

The bill was approved on the motion of Benguet Rep. Jose Molintas with Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, the vote declared.

Rodriguez said a tax on text would be an added burden on Filipinos.

Privacy, restoring system

Rodriguez also noted possible threats to the privacy of individuals posed by the installation of a metering system that would monitor the number of text messages sent and the amount of total load of each mobile subscriber.

Quezon Rep. Rodolfo Nonato also stated that his proposed metering scheme was incorporated in the bill.

Nonato said this would address a big tax loophole. At present, the government has no way of verifying how many text messages telcos have transmitted.

As a result, the big three mobile phone providers were free, locally dictating the amount of taxes they were paying, Nonato said.

In 2008, based on Philippine Stock Exchange data, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (Smart) netted ₱34.84 billion; Philippine Telephone Corp. (Telik K Text), with ₱11.31 billion; and Globe Telecom (₱11.39 billion).

In House Bill No. 6025, Nonato succeeded in earmarking the proceeds of the proposed text tax as seed money for acquiring computers and establishing computer labs by the Department of Education, state universities and colleges, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

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Lakas-Kampi-CMD in peril

From page A1

me that will recommend the political parties that Lakas-CMD will endorse only for the 2010 polls.

But he refused to name the parties, saying the committee would still have to review the matter.

"Still, 50 of the first batch of Lakas outgoing solons branded the party declared they will join forces and then reduce only one of the major political parties to choose a presidential candidate who will lead the battle against poverty and corruption," De Venecia told Inquirer reporters.

He scoffed at the capability of the Lakas-Kampi-CMD to field a presidential candidate, saying: "How can they field a standard bearer when there is no unity?"

'Reigning party'

The group of 50 denounced the Lakas-Kampi merger as "illegal and void ab initio" and called on the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to stop the President and the officials of the merged party from using the name of Lakas.

The passage of the resolution denouncing the merger was reached up on the motion of former Secretary Leila De Lima—Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III and Emmi Isidro Jr.—with Deputy Speaker Eduardo Zialcita presiding.

Guingona said his group affirmed that Lakas-CMD "is a reigning party" because "the merger is illegal, not approved and ratified by the Lakas National Assembly, and all the nine officers [are] illegally elected."

Isidro said another reported the Lakas-Kampi merger as illegal and so, based the post of chair since the official

RAMOS DE VENECIA

ELDER STATESMEN: President Macapagal-Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro appear on for a senatorial stood during the 15th anniversary of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office on Tuesday at the PCSO grounds on E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City. GERRY ALANSANGAN

to him by its officials.

In response, Lakas-Kampi officials had said they would try to woo Nacionalista Party members.

But De Venecia said the former President's presence at yesterday's meeting clearly showed where he stood on the issue.

De Venecia has also asked the Comelec to nullify the merger and to refrain from recognizing Lakas-Kampi-CMD as the dominant majority party.

His petition will be heard on Sept. 15.

'Sir? Who?'

Asked to comment on the actions of the 50 Lakas members, Speaker Prospero Nograles did not appear impressed.

"Who are these people? Who? I doubt that any Arroyano, I hope they are not the misfit leaders but just the loyal followers of the former Speaker," Nograles said in a text message.

Those who gathered at the meeting held at De Venecia's residence included many former members of Cabinet members, congressmen and officials of government corporations.

Among those were former Representatives Edcel Lagman, Jose Tan Rocamora, Bibi Cuenco, Mon Fuentes and Rejie Cabochan; Lakas treasurer Tony Villar; Lakas deputy secretary general Luis Cienfuegos; and Lakas deputy executive director Mary Ann Bobiles.

Also present were Sen. Dragnet, Col. Willy dela Cruz, former Transportation Secretary Leo Lapchiman, businessman Fernando Dela, Sen. dean Ananda Valdez, columnist Cel Dacanay, Ben Serrano, Mariglen Rivera, MD Bolisoma, Teodulo Jalosco, Ed Mabay, Felipe Sayson, Teddy Manacio, Mahan Sumerad Juan Bermeg.

De Venecia said the 50 Lakas members were only the first batch that would exclude their party from the supposed Kampi merger.

He said the weighted Lakas members would travel all over the country to meet with other members disgruntled with the merger and reconstitute or bring edgar out of their positions by Kampi members.

'Small group'

On the phone with the Inquirer, Lakas-Kampi-CMD secretary general Gabriel Claudio scoffed at the remarks of De Venecia et al. and said they should await the Comelec resolution on the coalition's accreditation.

"What group or party can they claim belong to supposed party?" said Claudio. Mr. Arroyo's political advisor. That's precisely why there's a case for the registration and accreditation of the merger before the Comelec. Even former President Ramos said we should leave this to the Comelec and await its decision."

Claudio added: "Can that small group overturn the decision and support of overwhelming members representing Lakas and Kampi or all levels of government nationwide?"

Prospero Pichay, coalition vice president for membership, said De Venecia and company could not represent Lakas-CMD because they were not occupying seats in the party before the merger.

He pointed out that Speaker Nograles was Lakas president when the merger took place.

"They can't say Lakas-CMD. They are not the majority of Lakas-CMD," Pichay said on the phone.

Claudio agreed, saying Executive Secretary Edmundo Ermita, Secretary Silvestre Bello, Edgardo Pamintuan, himself and many others "are not from Lakas originally but they are."

He said the Comelec rules on the issue, both Claudio and Pichay said, it was premature for De Venecia's group to claim the merger was illegal.

"This is being signed in the Comelec," Claudio said. "I suggest we let the administrators of the then-mentor, former President Ramos, that we leave the matters to the Comelec and await its decision."

Claudio also said De Venecia's decision to sometime the group and announce that it would coalesce with others did not come as a surprise.

"JDV has ... a commitment with one or more presidential aspirants outside of the administration," Claudio said without elaborating. With a report from TJ Burgonio

Sen. Lito Lapid wants to be governor again

From page A1

than being a senator.

"Dito ako komportable. Gusto ko yung nakapit sa mas sa mabuhay (I'm comfortable here. I prefer public service that is closer to the people)," he told reporters here.

The language barrier—Lapid openly concedes having limited skills in English—may have added to his discomfort.

As early as 2007, he filed a resolution calling for a Filipino translation of the Senate Rules of Procedure.

High school grad

When his resolution was finally adopted this year, the move was seen as a much-needed relief to the senator himself, a high school graduate and former movie actor.

"Para makinabang ay ating mga kababayan, na sa aking sarili (So that our countrymen, and I myself, would understand)."

Lapid told the reporters in an interview early this year.

Kaso bigkasan nung bigkasan dito. Mangod na rin ako dito para maunawa pa rin sa ating hirap nating bibigkas na mahirap sa English (Talk! Talk! Because English is widely spoken here. And I've been here for some time now but still don't understand those high-falutting words)," he had said in the same interview.

Senator vs governor

Lapid now sits as first-term senator with a string of box-office hits before he entered politics. He unveiled his provincial governor of Pampanga for nine years before retiring to reside next in 2004.

Asked to compare his experience as a senator and a governor, he said: "What you see governor you decide on your own. When you are in the Senate, you have to ask the chairman of [whom] to attend."

Lapid, 53, said reconciliations with fellow senator delayed the delivery of public service so he decided to return to local politics where he could easily reach out to his province mates.

"I will continue with my calendars responsibilities of opposition," he said.

His administration, however, was plagued by allegations of irregularities in Pampanga's sand quarrying industry.

He said he had discussed with President Macapagal-Arroyo his plan to seek the governor's seat.

"Hindi Presidente lang sa akin. I wanted to go back to Pampanga to run for governor and she advised me [to pursue my political plan]," said Lapid, who ran and won as an administration candidate of the Lakas-CMD in the 2004 senatorial elections.

Lapid's running mate

During the press conference, Lapid introduced his running mate, neophyte politician Lea Diron, his town mate in Pampanga and daughter of real estate developer Susan Diron.

Asked to explain his choice, he said Diron was "God fearing and most trustworthy in handling the affairs of the provincial government. Diron declined requests for interviews.

"Dito sil will be my leading lady in the political arena," Lapid said.

In 2007, Lapid ran for senator but lost to Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay, a top leader of the opposition.

Despite the loss, Lapid retained his post to the Senate because election laws allowed him to serve the remainder of his six-year term.

He was the principal author of the Automatic Act of 2008, a measure that grants lawyers and their firms tax incentives and parity when they render free legal services to poor clients.

Back to Pozzc

Lapid transferred his voter's registration from Makati City to Porac—the area in preparation for his candidacy.

Mrs. Gov. Jennifer Sonia said: we declared his intention to run for governor next year as a way of continuing the legacy of his late father, former Gov. Ben Lapid.

Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio welcomed Lapid's return to Pampanga politics, saying this would give Kapampangans voters more options when they choose their leaders next year.

Plunder case

In June, Panlilio, a Catholic priest-turn-lawyer who is serving his first term as governor, filed a plunder complaint against Lapid and his wife, former Gov. Mick Lapid, for their alleged failure to account for P168 million in quarry taxes and fees during their terms.

The younger Lapid, now the Philippine Tourism Authority general manager, lost his re-election bid to Panlilio in 2007.

Up to the Ombudsman

Panlilio, who has dropped his bid to run for president, but has yet to announce if he is seeking reelection, said the campaign period would allow the older Lapid to air his side on the plunder charges.

Lapid said he would await the Ombudsman's decision on the case. "It's easy to accuse people of anything. I will leave the judgment ... to the Ombudsman," he said.

In his plunder complaint, Panlilio said the Lapids only collected P126 million in total and gained more from 2002 to June 2007, when collections should have amounted to at least P280 million.

Gag order issued to Chavit, Che by QC family court

From page A1

Reporters were barred from the hearing, as the aim of Sole is a family court that prohibits reporters from sitting in during the proceedings.

The petition for a protection order under Republic Act No. 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Persons and Children (VAWC) Act of 2004 was declared last week as Q-09-65512 and raffled to Sala's court on Thursday.

The hearing yesterday morning was attended by Singson and her lawyer, Dones Lemuzon.

Singson, the victim

Singson, who was not present at the hearing, had sought relief of "withdraw" proving filed by wife, in fact, the victim in the case according to National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzalez, who met with his deputy over dinner on Monday night.

Gonzalez and Singson were upsetting the understanding and presented to "explain himself before the public."

"If you listen to Chavit, he was also aggrieved as I don't know how to behave [things]. This kind of problem is unique to every couple. They have their own emotion," Gonzalez said yesterday in a media briefing at the newly renovated Bureau of Immigration building in Manila.

He also said that Singson had declined Malacañang's advice for him to take a voluntarily course of absence from hefty charges of beating up his estranged common-law wife.

Singson, however, admitted that it was "wrong" in fact Singson is true if he had improved his couple but in the company of another man.

He admitted this to Gonzalez, who had been tasked by President Macapagal-Arroyo to make appropriate recommendations on Singson's fate to the Cabinet.

"You know, my friend, beating his wife is really wrong," Gonzalez quoted Singson as telling him.

He said, she said

The exchange of accusations between Singson and Singson has once caught the interest of the public after the latter filed a case of physical injuries before Quezon City prosecutor last week.

Singson claimed that Singson beat her and her boyfriend inside her apartment. Singson retaliated with claims that Singson had cheated on him.

Singson had admitted that he beat up his ex-partner on Aug. 22 after he supposedly caught Singson with her boyfriend inside her Quezon City apartment.

The estranged couple have five children who are staying with Singson in their Quezon City home.

Suddenly quiet

After the closed-door hearing yesterday, reporters tried to ask Singson questions about the case, but unlike previous interviews, she was quiet and left all the talking to her lawyer.

The case was officially submitted for the court and told court to issue any more statements concerning the matter," Lemuzon said.

He added that counsels for both parties were told not to speak about the case.

"I hope you understand that while this case has caught the imaginations of the public, you have to respect that this is first and foremost a private matter," Lemuzon said.

The next hearing is set for Sept. 30.

Out of the Cabinet?

As to Singson's fate in the Cabinet, Malacañang Executive Secretary Gonzalez told he needed more time to look into his deputy's case, saying that the matter had now gone beyond a mere domestic problem.

"Because it is indispensable in the Cabinet. The manner he use to do it is for him, to suspend him, but that's not the case in this issue," Gonzalez said.

"I thought that we should give him a little more time rather than just be pressured by the growing clamor for us to do something right away. It's not an easy issue," he added.

Gonzalez said he sees parties fairly concerned on how to keep Singson and Singson's five children from "being caught in the crossfire of a raging war between two people who have been responsible something very difficult."

"Talk things over with your wife. I am willing to help if needed. But let's keep the children from being hurt," he told his deputy.

Gonzalez said his conversation don't touch on conversations on whether Singson's family problems were growing in the way of his official functions in the Cabinet and how it was affecting the public image of the Malacañang Council.

He also denied his deputy of allegations that he had avoid the reporters of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency to spy on his wife.

"I don't think so and it's not because he said so," he said. "I would have known if he had done so."

Fire him

The militant women's group Gabriela yesterday called on the various administration to fire Singson for brutally beating up his former wife in public.

In a statement, Gabriela secretary general Emmi de Jesus said it was not enough for Malacañang to suspend Singson.

"If there is even an iota of decency left in the house of government, it should sack Chavit rather than merely ask him to go on leave," De Jesus said.

And since Singson had admitted beating up Tongson, De Jesus said a court decision was no longer needed for President Macapagal-Arroyo to decide on his fate.

"Clearly admitted he beat up Tongson. That is enough reason for Malacañang to kick him out of public office," De Jesus said.

'Be more than alarmed'

Gabriela also scoffed at statements made by Palace spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo who on Monday said that Mr. Arroyo "is reasons and on the hand of our government, is alarmed and intently concerned" by the scenes from of Tongson.

"Mr. Arroyo should be more than merely alarmed and concerned. Like say, decent Filipinos, she should be outraged and immediately and severely sanction Chavit for his crimes and his unrepentant and even proud admission of it," De Jesus said.

Members of the women's group accompanied Tongson yesterday morning during a hearing in Quezon City for the permanent protection order she had sought against Singson.

De Jesus said Gabriela would continue supporting Tongson in her fight for justice.

Domestic violence cases

Gabriela has handled around 1,400 cases of domestic violence since the implementation of RA 9262 in 2005. Of this number, only 121 victims sought court action using the law. Of the 122 cases filed, majority were women that they could not prosecute cases.

"Tongson and other victims and survivors of violence, especially those jailed against the rich and powerful, can only hope to get a semblance of justice with the scale and determination of women to fight and end violence against women," De Jesus said.

Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chair Leila de Lima said it would investigate the case as soon as Tongson filed a complaint with the agency.

Legal tools

De Lima said the CHR would use the VAWC law and the recently passed Magna Carta of Women as legal tools to protect women victims of violence in their homes fights.

"Human rights means recovery can be protected. Women are vulnerable and need protection. Men who are government leaders should be aware that their primary responsibility is to protect human rights and lead by example," De Lima said.

Bishop Cruz retires

Vatican

This time Pope Benedict XVI accepted his retirement.

The Vatican also announced that Cruz would be replaced by Villegas.

Villegas was born on Sept. 28, 1960 in Manila and was ordained on Oct. 5, 1985 at age 25.

He immediately became personal secretary to the late Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin whom he served for 13 years until he was ordained a bishop in 2001.

Villegas also served as rector of the Mary Queen of Peace, Our Lady of Edsa Shrine from the time it was built in 1989 until May 2004.

He was installed bishop of the Diocese of Bahayan on July 3, 2004.

CBCP head for two terms

Cruz, who was elected by his peers president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) for two terms from 1995 to 1999, has been vocal about the Arroyo administration.

He has spoken out against allegations of corruption against Mr. Arroyo, her family and administration, and assailed the spate of extrajudicial killings of activists.

He has taken up a crusade against gambling and has repeatedly denounced the Arroyo administration's failure to curb the illegal numbers game "jueteng," which brought down former President Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Form new government

On Oct. 2-3 last year, five ranking Church leaders, including Cruz and Villegas, delivered a strongly worded statement against massive and systemic corruption in the Arroyo administration and declared that "the time to form a new government is now."

Although the five bishops sought "radical reforms," they did not call for any mass action. Instead, they urged the public to use democratic "checks and balances."

The joint statement was issued by Cruz, Villegas, Manolo Bishop Juvi Bautista, Legazpi Bishop Emeritus Jose Sorra and then auxiliary Bishop Angel Lagdameo, who is set to step down as CBCP president in December.

Gratitude to Mary

"The Lord thought that came to my mind upon knowing of the change of my ecclesiastical status is to thank the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. The reason is it's her birthday anniversary (yesterday)," Cruz was quoted by the CBCPNews as saying.

He expressed his gratitude to the clergy, their religious and the laity in the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan "for being very understanding and patient with me."

They "were able to bear with me for about two decades and that is to their credit," he said.

Cruz first applied for retirement in March 2007 when he was 71. The Catholic Church's Canon Law sets the retirement age for bishops at 75 although the approval still rests with the Pope.

Matrimonial tribunal

Back then Cruz had said he wanted to turn over his duties to the "younger folks" although he had said he planned to concentrate on his advocacy and remain as head of CBCP's matrimonial tribunal after his retirement.

"If I survive to submit what other materials Bishop some to me asked, Boy, I am very proud of my clergy. And second, I am very happy with my forthcoming assistance, as Bishop-Secretary Villegas will now have to be a man of integrity and strong character," Cruz was also quoted as saying yesterday.

Born on Nov. 17, 1934 in Balagtas, Bulacan, Cruz was ordained on Feb. 10, 1962 at the age of 27.

San Carlos Seminary rector

He served as rector of the San Carlos Seminary in Makati and was appointed archbishop of Manila in 1974. He became archbishop of San Fernando (Pampanga) in 1981.

He had served as archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan since Aug. 24, 1991. His episcopal ordination was on May 3, 1974.

Cruz served as a judicial vicar of the CBCP Matrimonial Tribunal of Appeals and director of its legal office.

Prolific writer

A prolific writer and lately a blogger, Cruz has published many books, including "1001 Quotations on Sexual Abuse and Misconduct: A Collection" and "Code of the Lolly."

In his most recent blog entries (www.ex-bishop.com), Cruz spoke out against the expected dirty tricks and machinations in the upcoming electoral campaign.

He said there was a "big probability that the ruling administration would leave no stone unturned to stay in power and might at least [try] the unspeakable to guarantee."

Rapist misled DOJ, says victims' mom

From page A1

without notifying the family of his victims and inviting a public hearing.

"Our process requires that you must always hear the other party ... There should have been a public hearing and the private complainant should have been notified," said Santiago, the sponsor of the RP-Spain Transfer of Sentenced Persons Agreement.

The senator said the DOJ should immediately set a public hearing to trust the kin of Jacqueline and Marilyn Chiong could say their piece.

She said the Chiong family could file a motion for reconsideration before the DOJ "so that they could have a chance to raise their objections."

Difficult time

Chiong said it was a particularly difficult time for her family to plan the fight against the transfer of Lawalega, one of seven young men convicted of kidnapping, raping and killing her daughters.

Marilyn would have turned 32 yesterday, and Jacqueline, 34 today.

The mother said her family arrived at a Mass yesterday morning and visited Marilyn's grave at Cebu City Gendan memorial park in Cebu City.

Jacqueline's body was never found.

Chiong said she was preparing a letter to the DOJ to enlist the followers informally as a basis to block Lawalega's transfer. She said she would consult the family's lawyers before sending the letter.

Chiong said the writ of execution was served on Lawalega's family in 2007, to no avail.

Asked if she would accept the money if it were paid, she paused briefly and replied in the affirmative.

"Of course, I will. It is part of the decision. It is not a bribe or a settlement. It is the indemnification for the heartache and the tears," she said with a hint of sarcasm in her voice.

Citizenship

Chiong also said she would question Lawalega's citizenship in her letter, saying she did not believe that he was a Spanish citizen.

According to Ms Sarah Lavadia, acting TL, qualifies for the prisoner exchange here as he is a Spanish citizen by virtue of his father's acquisition.

His mother Margarita Lawalega is a convicted heroin trafficker.

According to Ms Sarah Lavadia, acting TL, qualifies for the prisoner exchange here as he is a Spanish citizen by virtue of his father's acquisition.

His mother Margarita Lawalega is a convicted heroin trafficker.

Margarita Lawalega could not be reached for comment. She used to respond to phone calls from the Inquirer but yesterday, repeated calls to her mobile phone went unanswered.

A member of the influential Osmeña clan of Cebu, Margarita Lawalega could have to insist on her son's innocence. She had said she was unhappy with the decision for tagging her son a "rapist" in its headlines.

Good moral conduct

Chiong said another point that should have blocked the approval of Lawalega's transfer was the length of imprisonment, which would have entitled the latter to gain another quarantine—good moral conduct—originated in the treaty to prisoner exchange.

She quoted acting Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera as saying that a prisoner was considered to have shown good moral conduct after serving a jail term of 14 years and 20 days.

But Lawalega has been imprisoned for only 12 years, she said, adding:

"He should serve two more years in prison to be able to [show] good moral conduct."

Chiong said she would furnish House President Jose Prince Emilio and Speaker Prospero Nograles copies of her letter objecting to Lawalega's transfer.

She said her family was considering filing an appeal in the case with the Supreme Court, and was consulting lawyers on the matter.

She also said the DOJ would not have approved the transfer without approval from Malacañang.

Double-check

Devanadera, the concurrent acting general, said she had ordered officials to double-check whether Lawalega had indeed paid moral damages for his crimes.

She said Lawalega's transfer to a prison in Spain could still be stopped if it was found that he has yet to pay the Chiong family the amount of P750,000 ordered by the Cebu regional trial court following his conviction.

"Of course," she said. "That is one of the conditions of the transfer."

She also said she was willing to meet with Thelma Chiong in Brussels on issues in connection with the court's proposed repayment of damages.

"I already checked. It appears that a deposit was made in court and that there was a certification issued to that effect," Devanadera told the Inquirer on the phone.

"I already had the information verified. What I have are just documents," she said.

She indicated her willingness to take up the matter of the legality of Lawalega's transfer, saying: "Anybody can come to me to address their things."

According to DOJ documents, the Cebu City RTC issued on May 16, 2009, a certification that P750,000 was deposited with the clerk of court as payment for Lawalega's liability.

After evaluating the application by Jennifer and the documents submitted in support thereof, the department finds that the said application complies with the requirements of the RP-Spain Treaty," said the DOJ approved signed by Devanadera.

Not compulsory

Senator Santiago said the treaty "doesn't make it compulsory for the Philippines to endanger prisoners in Spain."

"The treaty makes it optional for the state to grant the request of the other state. So it is completely discretionary on our part," she said, adding:

"There are certain requirements that must be met, but in order to prove that those requirements have been met, it is not sufficient just to go over the papers."

Santiago also said the DOJ should have also first issued the implementing rules and regulations of the treaty after it was ratified by Ms Arroyo in 2007.

Told of Purdue Chiong's contention that moral damages had yet to be paid, Santiago said the treaty could only be enforced if the decision in the case was final.

"In that case, I don't think the decision will be considered final because even if the case is criminal in nature, the civil aspect will always accompany the criminal aspect ... The decision can't be final if there is no payment of the civil aspect. So I am puzzled. We lack information on this," she said.

'No lobby'

Interviewed by the Inquirer later, Santiago denied talk that the treaty was ratified for the benefit of Lawalega, a great grandson of the late President Sergio Osmeña.

"There was no lobby. Nobody talked to me about the Lawalegas case," said Santiago, the chair of the Senate foreign relations committee.

Santiago said the then Senate majority had pushed for the treaty's ratification because it was in the national interest for Arroyo was then preparing to go to Spain on a state visit.

She said the Department of Foreign Affairs had informed her committee that the approval of a treaty between the two countries would be most welcome at the time.

Recalling the debates in the Senate floor, Santiago said another senator had asked her about the implication of the treaty on Lawalega's case.

Spain can't change sentence

"I answered it may be favorable to him but pointed out there were two other Filipinos there with pending applications for transfer to the Philippines. So I told on the floor, 'It will put Spain in a better attitude toward the two Filipinos if we grant the request of Lawalega,'" she said.

Reverting to apprehensions that once Lawalega is in Spain, the Spanish government could just free him, Santiago said it would not change the Philippine decision on Lawalega's case. "They can't give him a pardon or parole or change his sentence." With a report from Dorothea Bordadora

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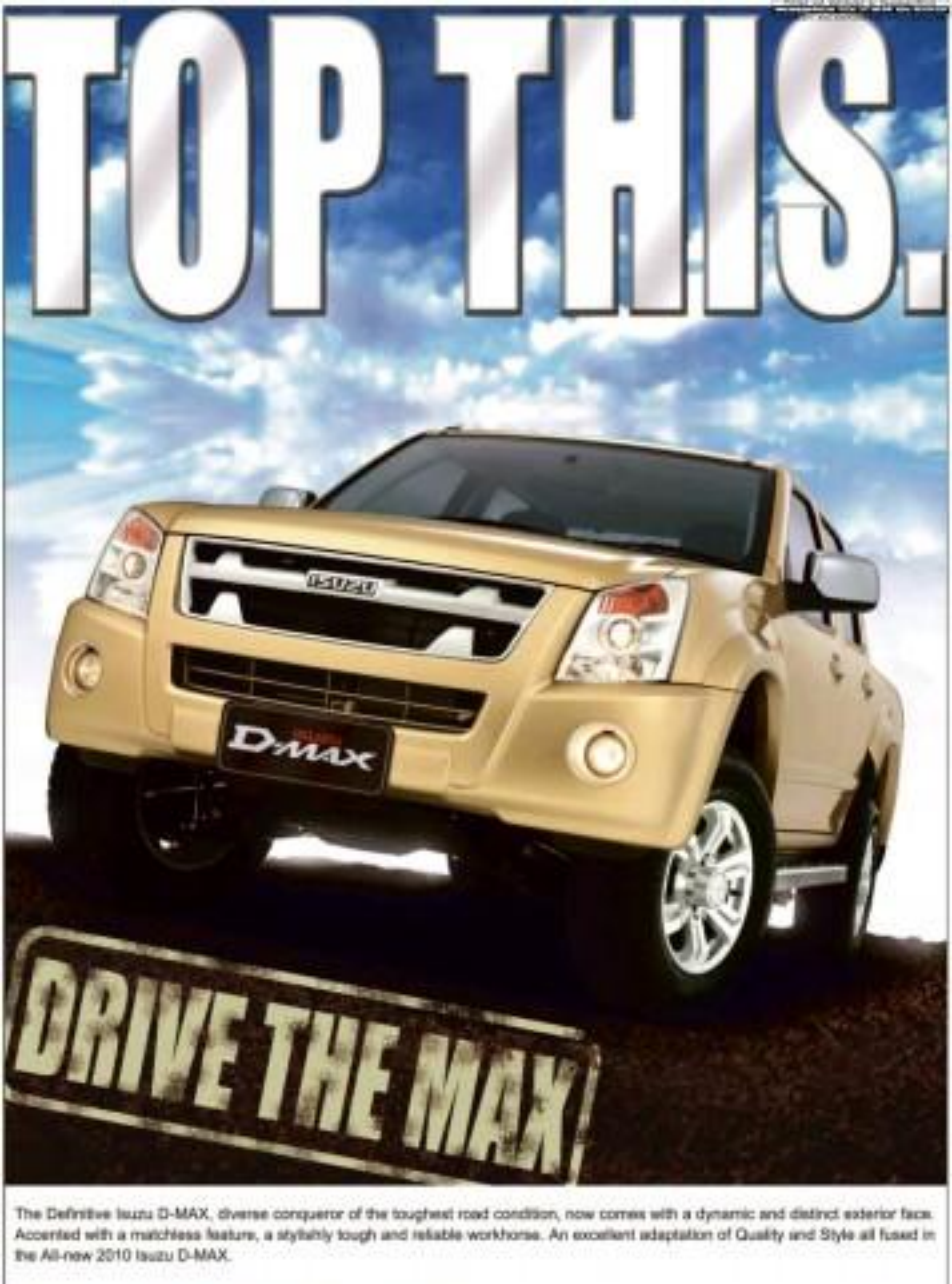

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OPINION

Faking heroics

MALACAÑANG HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT wants Congress to enact quickly the proposed Marine Code of 2009. This important piece of legislation has been in the works for some time, but the sinking of SuperFerry 9 last Sunday has forced the Arroyo administration to appear to be doing something. We have to caution the public against giving either Congress or President Macapagal-Arroyo too much credit for this, however.

EDITORIAL

The reason is that the proposed Marine Code is in many ways a shining example of private and public sector and even international cooperation, but has also been a casualty of the one-step-forward two-steps-backward inclinations of the present dispensation. Last July, proponents of the measure were lobbying the President to demonstrate political will by including the proposed Marine Code in her State of the Nation Address, to call attention to ongoing efforts and to ask Congress to make the bill a priority measure. She did not. There was said to be a country lobby against the bill on the part of domestic shippers, who would be forced to modernize their fleets and who didn't relish the increased corporate accountability contemplated by the bill.

Operators of ports also opposed the bill because it sought to take away the Philippine Port Authority's regulatory powers, shaking up the comfortable regulatory status quo for these operators, just when at least one of them has reached a near-mythical status in terms of supposed influence and importance among the President's big business backers and friends.

Whatever the reasons, the plain reality is that the President refrained from endorsing the bill as a counter-piracy reform program of her administration. While this didn't actually kill the bill, it certainly took the wind out of its sails, ensuring that it wouldn't be passed before the present Congress passes into history with the 2010 elections. Therefore, all the noise being made by the House to appear to do something is too little, too late, and worse, an attempt to hide its responsibility for essentially killing a bill it now wants to prioritize.

Up to the time of the fiasco, the effort to craft the Marine Code of 2009, a piece of legislation meant to be an omnibus maritime code for the country, had enjoyed the President's tacit support. Previous congressional action, including RA 9295 or the Domestic Shipping Act of 2004, had deregulated the shipping industry but failed to noticeably improve things. Other laws date back to the Commonwealth; still more have stripped national agencies of their powers and oversight, dispersing responsibilities among an alphabet soup of competing agencies. For example the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) has had its powers reduced or transferred to agencies ranging from the Department of Labor and Employment (concerning seafarers) and the Department of Trade and Industry (concerning sea freight forwarders and ship agents) to the Philippine Coast Guard (for determining the seaworthiness of vessels).

Marina Administrator Maria Elena Bautista had proposed renaming those functions as Marina while undertaking a comprehensive consolidation and updating of maritime legislation to be enshrined in an omnibus Merchant Shipping Act (the Marine Code of 2009). The law would authorize Marina to handle all concerns ranging from seafarers to shippers to ship owners, including judicial and arbitration powers which had the potential of making the Philippines a regional if not world center for such things.

The process received international funding and support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation through the Norwegian Maritime Directorate (Sjøfartsdirektoratet) and involved experts from the University of the Philippines Public Administration Research and Development Foundation Inc. (UPPAF), and the Center for Research and Communication Foundation Inc. of the University of Asia and the Pacific (CRC/UAP) as technical advisers and consultants to craft the necessary legislation.

But the President decided not to make the call to pass the proposed bill last July.

What if there is a failure of elections?

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

TWO SENATORS-TO-BE TALKED ABOUT electoral reforms at last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila Bay. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III is running his poll protest against Sen. Migz Zubiri, and Grace Poe, daughter of the late unproclaimed president of the Philippines, Fernando Poe Jr., is being drafted as senatorial candidate in the ticket of the senate king's bastard friend, Joseph Estrada.

As a victim of election cheating, Koko wants to introduce in the Senate bills that would make it difficult for cheaters and make it easier to nullify election returns tainted by cheating. "It is very open, easy and difficult to pursue an election protest," said Koko. "Your lawyers decide the proceedings, and that adds to the cost. Meanwhile, by velocity of the counter-protest, protest and post-protest, that rightfully belongs to you. And then when you are finally proclaimed the winner, only a few days of the term are left. The voters in favor of the (loser) and (were) against (were) cheating."

Why not file a bill "if impeached," they would freeze all the emoluments, including the pork barrel, of an official against whom a charge of election fraud has been filed that is found next, serious after a preliminary investigation? Whoever is finally declared the winner gets the frozen accruals. That should discourage cheating. Why would anybody cheat when he cannot collect the fruits of his cheating?"

"I didn't think of that," Koko replied. "Yes, I'll do that."

"Right now," I continued, "even if a cheated candidate finally wins in the end, it is an empty victory. Only a few days of the term are left to him and the cheater has already collected almost all of the salaries and allowances of the office. The winner is left holding an empty bag. There was one winning candidate who was sworn into the House of Representatives on the last day of the term. The theater was seen laughing during the oath-taking."

"There is no time and expediency in the courts," somebody said. "The cheater throws votes, no matter who is declared winner."

"Would you still have any of your senatorial terms left if you are unseated?" I asked. "I joked. 'Half of the term is quite already.'"

"There are still three years left," Koko replied.

They have not yet been proclaimed? What if no president has been proclaimed? There too have a constitutional crisis.

"What is the line of succession?

"After the President, the Vice President takes over, then the Senate President, and then the Speaker. But these terms would all end at the same time, and if no replacements have been proclaimed by then, the positions would be vacant.

"How about the Chief Justice?

"The 1987 Constitution does not put him in the line of succession."

"How about the Senate President?"

"The term of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile also ends in June. So there is no Senate President."

"The remaining senators can elect a new Senate President."

"But there are only 12 holdover senators and the Constitution provides that the Senate President be elected by a majority of the votes."

"So should it? The senators-elect crave Senate President before the present Congress adjourns?" I asked. "Then we will have a holdover Senate President who can be acting President in case of a failure of elections. Punch the 'yes'."

"I am sure there would be some who would question that, but we should in that to prevent a constitutional crisis, SPC can resign as Senate President before Congress adjourns so a non-senator President can be elected. That Senate President will be the acting President of the Philippines in case there is a failure of elections."

* * *

Let me now go to the graceful Grace Poe.

She has been largely an unknown quantity in the past in spite of the popularity of her father. But if the Kapihan the showed that she is very intelligent and is well-versed in public and governmental affairs. Her bio-data also shows that she was a consistent scholar from elementary school to college, graduating as either valedictorian or salutatorian of her class. Election returns in case of her salvage, she will be a truly natural because her father was elected not with the presidency by election syndicates.

Yes, he can

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE THOUGHT, OR CHALLENGE, PERSISTS: Can Noynoy do it? Or reformers thereof: Is he qualified to become president? Does he have what it takes to be president?

The questions doesn't just come from GMA people, who ask it with disdainful sneers. They come from students who ask it with genital concern. One e-mail I got put it this way: If you're applying to become CEO of a company, you have to submit a résumé. What credentials has Noynoy to become CEO of this country?

The problem about this is just ridiculous, but a couple more things need pointing out.

First off, the question, "Will Noynoy be a good CEO?" is a wrong one. The job at hand is not CEO of a company, it is janitor of a building. What this country needs today is not someone to manage things, it is someone to clean up things. What we need today is not someone to make a business flourish, it is someone to make a dwelling place habitable, one whose previous tenant left it in a condition only cockroaches, rats, and real-estate speculators, in ascending order of prominence, can appreciate. Who better to do this than Noynoy?

Or if you persist in using the CEO image, the job at hand is CEO, but only of a company that has been bankrupted by a bunch of crooks. Whose world you have to reinvent? Recollective fresh with a long-treated hue who has business interests that may compete with the company who is a favorite teacher or beholden to people who are, and who therefore can only be trusted to officially pilfer some more? Or someone you can trust?

Again, a no-brainer.

The applying for CEO idea presumes three elections are normal elections or a peaceful transition, or a routine transfer of power like 1992 and 1998. They are not. Those are rational binary elections, a tribal transition, a still uncertain transfer of power. We need in the first place to make the elections legitimate. Like 1986. The glaring contrast of submitting victorious presidents successive. But the contrast is just elections. It is not, or it has gone beyond elections. The elections are just a battle, they are not the war. The war is not between candidates offering relative merits (or demerits), the war is between Good and Evil, between poky and freedom, between oppression and liberation. As noble souls said last year's UP elections, the cry is the cry: "We shall overcome," not the miserable "We shall endure, at best."

Noynoy represents the first, the rest of the field the second.

Second, all the question "Can Noynoy do it?" is a wrong one. The real question is, "Can we do it?" To paraphrase John F. Kennedy, what we need today is to ask not what the president can do for us but what we can do for the president.

That's what makes overconfidence the most destructive political vice of all. If the president is just an Oblivionist flunkey, why on earth would you want to ask yourself what you can do for your president? You would want to ask yourself only what you can do to her, particularly if she refuses to go.

Indeed, that's what shows the folly or danger of the CEO template. A CEO is accountable only to the stockholders, not to the hundreds of men and women employed by the company. The hundreds of men and women he can order around and fire as he pleases. At political equivalent is that the president is accountable only to the cronies and cartels who spent for his campaign, and to the citizens of the country. The citizens he can fondly pretend and revere as he pleases.

That may be on for a dictatorship but not on for a democracy.

The premise of a democracy does not lie in a strong leader—or heaven forbid, strong republic—it lies in a strong people. The power of a democracy does not lie in conducting the people, it lies in including the people. The folly of our elections is that it is premised precisely on excluding the people in looking for "presidentiables" who can fill the role of Savior or Redeemer, who can save us from ourselves, who can spare us the need to apply ourselves to improving ourselves.

Which in any case is a monumental exercise in self-delusion. Or self-flagellation. We demand heaven but expect only hell. We ask of candidates the virtues of a messiah, but expect from the winner only the conduct of a car or candidate, as we say. Who would believe the candidates' promises when we ourselves will declare our their promises? We put a condition on the good's work, we're happy: we get an immoderate one, we say, "What else is new?"

We want to change the equation, we change ourselves. We change the way we are governed by including ourselves in our governance. Which is what a democracy is. Look at all the successful democracies and see if they are not premised on an active people, a vocal people, a people demanding to have a say in how they are governed.

The positively serious in praising "Noypi," both in the sense of "Noypi" as "Noynoy for President Initiative" and as "Noynoy's People's Initiative." I am aghast that another group is using that very name to promote their own political agenda. All started to unleash the power of the people in exercising it, not just electing charismatic, not just token things have gotten so bad we need to act to save ourselves. We need to unlock the key that makes People's Initiative—the young and feeling young Noypi—a force in everyday life.

All this is premised on a president we can trust. All this is premised on a president who does not cower power on badly due or he won't part with it at all costs, least of all to the governed. All this is premised on a president who is as much willing to believe that the voice of the people is the voice of God as the voice of God is the voice of the people. All this is premised on a president who is one-thirm good person.

Can Noynoy do it? Believe it.

Yes, he can.

LP takes the high ground

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

THE EMBRACING OF SENATOR BENIGNO "Noynoy" Aquino III as the likely presidential candidate of the Liberal Party in the May 2010 elections has made volatile the poll ratings of at least a dozen presidential aspirants.

With Aquino expected to announce his decision to run for president within a week or two, following the withdrawal from the presidential race of Sen. Mikaael Biazon II, the next surveys are expected to reflect the swiftly shifting moods of the voters.

The draft is likely to affect the placement of four aspirants who led the latest Pulse Asia survey of voters' preference in August: Sen. Manuel Villar, 21 percent; Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, 19 percent; Vice President Noli de Castro, 16 percent; Sen. Panfilo Lacson, 12 percent; and Roxas, 11 percent. Villar led the pack after gaining 11 percentage points from the 14 percent he polled in May. The others are the last polled to appear at or less.

Pundit Ibarra Perez Jose personalism, contributed that it was still premature to count in this that Villar's lead in the latest survey indicates a trend. "It's still a wide open field," said Bolinao, adding that Villar's experience on national television and radio through his advertisements helped to make him popular. Villar, a real estate magnate and housing developer, is reported to have spent heavily on television advertising.

From the May survey, Estrada posted a "tremendous improvement in his overall voter performance," with an increase of 4 percentage points over his 13 percent. Biazon's improvement to "a slight decline" of 6 percentage points from 17 percent.

The Senate investigations into his real estate transactions involving the extension of public roads into his properties in Cavite thus did not seem to have hurt Villar's poll ratings. The Senate Blue Ribbon committee headed by Villar's counterpart in the administration's political coalition, Senator Enrile, would call either for suspension from the Senate or censure.

While the poll results have become fluid following the entry of Aquino into the presidential race, his emergence as a dark horse has introduced a new defining issue in the 2010 election. The issue is about good and honest government and integrity in public service. The movement to draft Aquino has the potential to turn into a referendum on the unpunished grief over the death of Aquino's mother, former President Corazon Aquino. The movement offers Aquino as a candidate for change and political reform and for him to shape a set of transparency in government led by Cory Aquino over the many years of his late term. Being close to Aquino Jr. in the oligarchic against the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos.

Supporters of the draft for Aquino have raised the ethical high ground, making transparency in government and reform the centerpiece of their campaign to elect the senator to the presidency. They hand the estimated billions of Aquino. In soliciting support from the fractured opposition parties, former Senate President Franklin Drilon, Cory Aquino's constitutional secretary, offers Aquino as the epitome of reform and transparency.

In this advocacy, Drilon has to overcome reluctance on the part that Aquino does not measure up to the president's, because he lacks experience and because of his undistinguished legislative record as congressman for three terms and senator for two more. But Drilon emphasizes two elements going for Noynoy: his political pedigree and honesty. "What's most important is the character of Noynoy," Drilon says. "His moral standard is very high. Considering the fact that he's the son of Ninoy and Cory, the burden of history is on him and that alone should serve him and the people well."

There is no doubt that Noynoy has an edge. It puts his rivals on the defensive. Yet many of his opponents can adopt good governance as issues, which has now appeared to be the most important issue. Villar or Estrada, who seem determined to run for president, cannot use this issue to wage campaign. They would look outmaneuvered, outstaged.

The major issues of the governance issue as the backdrop of the 2010 election is assessed by the Pulse Asia findings of the seven administration's most ratings. While less than a year to go before President Macapagal-Arroyo steps down from office, the majority of Filipinos are still pessimistic. In the plurality public sentiment turned out. Four in 10 Filipinos are critical of her work in the last three months (42 percent) and regrets distrust in her (43 percent).

Worst poor ratings are a drag to administration candidates in the May elections. Opposition candidates can't have ratings to gain electoral boost, but who among the opposition presidential aspirants is the most credible in regaining public trust in the presidency?

His opposition party is making a dent to the election of Aquino. Encouraged by his poll ratings, Villar is pressing his bid as Nacionalista Party presidential candidate, although his party has no larger grassroots base than the Liberal Party. Drilon faces a big task in bringing the opposition parties behind Noynoy's candidacy. Already, the opposition is split into two camps, one trying to replicate the social politics of the Aquino presidency, particularly in regard to the Aquino-Trillanes-Recto-de Castro and the coalition of the Cory partisans Aquino in the hope of regain of the Cory Aquino coalition effort.

There is no political precedence to raise these issues because they are premised on the assumption that Noynoy would be a copy out of his mother's administration. Presidential years and gone on the job and evolve from their policies.

Male privilege

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WOMEN AND MEN, IT SEEMS, WILL HOLD convicting views on the Lionel Singson-Ora Tongson affair.

By way of background, the story for the uninitiated: when Ora Tongson, who had been Singson's long-time partner and mother of two of his children, sued Singson, the deputy national treasurer, for support, he filed his side of the story with her lover, and Aug. 22. Photos submitted by Tongson showed her bodily bruised face, with commission on her neck and shoulder. The lover then filed a case of physical injuries.

Singson now says he "saved their lives" when he walked in on the couple because otherwise they would have been killed by the men he sent to track them down. Personally, Singson told the press, he would have preferred Tongson's phone to remind me that he's responsible for not killing the two, apparently because that out have no longer condone a "crime of passion."

I missed the gender divide looming in the subdrama of Karen Davila and Ted de Leon fame, that is, when her then-husband Ted de Leon was found in the presidential suite of Vilma's room instead of the entourage's assigned room. Davila, of course, who would call either for suspension from the Senate or censure.

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Hidden history of the Pasig River

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

THE RIGHT BANK (AS SEEN FROM THE PASIG River) became in which political women will be ill-fated. The water level will then be higher and its stench will be reduced.

It is said that the river that has played a role in the history of the capital is practically dead in the sense that it cannot sustain fish and other plants and aquatic life. The Pasig River may be dead to different organisms that promote diseases.

Many people speak about the beauty of living Manila. They speak in the past tense. When people speak about the romantic Pasig River they often speak in the past tense.

There is a romantic tone here that can take you from Guadalupe to Tayuman to see these as being compared to a ride through traffic-choked streets. The river here is air-conditioned, efficient, comfortable. Using the river again for transportation is like going back in time.

Manuel L. Quezon III, in his column, described the Pasig as a short river with a long history. It is only 25 kilometers long, dividing Metro Manila in two parts, north and south. It is a long artery connecting Manila Bay and Laguna de Bay. Depending on the season, the flow of the river changes, allowing the sea waters to enter Laguna de Bay and the fresh waters to flow from Laguna de Bay to Manila Bay pouring through Laguna, Taguig, Taytay, Pasig, Makati, Mandaluyong and Marikina.

How the water flows proved to be the crux in the origin of the name "Pasig" which is said to be named after a tree of the same species. "A river that flowed from one body of water to another." But despite this highly plausible linguistic explanation for its name, everyone is still drawn to the tragic legend of the lovers Gaplas and Pun. They were being separated by their parents, so they decided to commit suicide by drowning in the Pasig, but poor Gaplas fell off the banca and she revolted Pun would be defiled if she knew how to swim, so he ordered her to drown. Gaplas refused to drown and swam to the other side of the river. Pun, in his anger, threw a spear at her and killed her. Gaplas, dying, ordered the river to be named after her. Pun, in his anger, threw a spear at her and killed her. Gaplas, dying, ordered the river to be named after her.

Another legend has it that the river was named after a tree called "pasig" which grew abundantly on its banks. Another legend has it that the river was named after a tree called "pasig" which grew abundantly on its banks.

Whatever the origin of the name, the Pasig River became the center of trade and commerce in the pre-Spanish era. Chinese ceramics dating from the 11th to the 14th century, a time long before Magellan, were found.

Today Dr. Fong gives the water a different area of the metropolis. It shows productivity from the river.

A canoe down the Pasig also helps us imagine how people traveled in the past, making us realize that the way we see and describe our surroundings is very much influenced by our culture. For example, when you ask children taking reading lessons to describe the Philippines, they will probably say, "The Philippines is an archipelago, a country composed of a group of islands separated by water." While not entirely false, this description is a product of our culture. Filipinos in pre-Spanish times described the archipelago for a person who lived on the edge before the coming of the wheel and the horse, for a person who lived before the construction of roads and bridges, the archipelago would have been a country of islands connected by water. In pre-Spanish times people traveled in canoes. You do not even set foot on government houses as the horses pay. From the pre-Spanish boat boatsmen? Never and we were not introduced to the pre-Spanish Filipinos. For them, water connected rather than separated. Even the Spanish colonizers connected cities and towns by water. They constructed river banks and bridges, people and goods together.

I have been fascinated by the Pasig for many years and have even lost my enthusiasm for it. Modern history. One can only hope that more people will learn to see it to appreciate both its present and its past.

Until the Pasig is cleaned up and restored, then we will not speak of it as the past tense anymore.

Comments are welcome at inquirer@yahoo.com

Cairo to Calatrava

LAST SATURDAY, THE TABLOID BULGAR CARRIED THIS news scrawled headline: "4 Anak Wilnaid si Mommy" (4 Children Devoured by Mommy).

I'll give a brief summary of what happened, omitting the names of the people involved. A 35-year-old woman told her husband she was taking her two children, aged 11, 6, 3 and 6 months, to the store. Two hours later, she returned alone and told her husband she had drowned all the children. The husband rushed to the river but was too late to save the children.

The woman said she had developed the children because of poverty. Reading about the incident, I realized poverty is so much more

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

people when it's described as. Reading "with no strong imagination"—she could not feed them anymore.

I'll—perhaps correctly—assume that the mother of the children had read about the Lucban, but I want to be on record here that I'm not crowing as an Cairenes. It could have been any other town in the Philippines, or some other country. My column title, "Cairo to Calatrava," grew a broader context in which such tragedies happen.

ICPD

There was plentiful irony to that incident, because on that another episode about her children, a conference was being held in Berlin to mark the 15th anniversary of the ICPD or International Conference on Population and Development.

The acronym is unfamiliar to many people, but for those who do recognize it, the word has cut for quite different, being either very positive or very negative. It was at the ICPD that governments agreed to work on problems as said "reproductive health," now often abbreviated as RH, as in the "RH bill" now being hotly debated in Congress.

Back in 1994, the ICPD, there were no official Catholic debates around the proposed Program of Action. Supporters of the Program of Action said there were trying to move the world forward from an old "population control" paradigm which looked at "population explosion" as the main cause of poverty. Advocates of this "control" position cast the problem as poverty in Third World countries (or treating) people, mainly the poor, to stop their fertility cold.

In Cairo, women's rights organizations joined public-health associations, health professionals' associations and other NGOs to present the government representatives to support a new perspective on population. This saw a "rights-based" approach that looked at family planning as only one of many ways that women can be empowered in life. The emphasis was on allowing people to make informed decisions about their reproductive life and their reproductive health.

ICPD also related population issues to development issues. Seen as fundamental cornerstones in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

With this rights-and-development perspective, the RH agenda was expanded to include many other services besides family planning. These included prenatal and postnatal care, protection from sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, also on the expanded agenda were early pregnancy, unsafe abortion, violence against women and girls, and domestic violence (now often referred to as intimate partner violence to include unmarried couples, as we've been seeing in the last few days' headlines).

Finally, because the emphasis was on informed choices, RH advocates also pushed for access to information and education for people and sexuality. This included access for young people.

ISSUES

RH did not sit well with conservatives, mainly from Islam and the Roman Catholic Church. RH, they said, was shorthand for abortion. Condoms and sex education would lead to more sexual promiscuity among the youth. Other terms to "gender rights" were interpreted as homosexual rights.

Today, in the Philippines, RH is attacked as part of a "HAPAS agenda": divorce, euthanasia, abortion, total population control, homosexuality and sex education.

Because the anti-RH rhetoric is so annoying, many people buy into the arguments. I've lost track of which issues they can pick and choose. One congressman interviewed on TV said he was totally in favor of family planning, but did not like sex education, as he was opposing the RH bill. Others, fearful of homosexuality, say that sex education leads to gender rights and eventually same-sex marriages.

As the debates rage, many people will be caught in the crossfire, namely those who desperately need RH services, as we saw in the Magsaysay husband tragedy.

Curiously, even as the authorities prepare charges of parricide against the woman, there've also speculated that she was suffering from "postpartum syndrome." The tabloid article said, in Filipino, that the woman was "normal at ng ng 10-30 period of women who have delivered" and that she was "temporary."

I would warn against medicalizing the depression mothers might encounter after delivery. We can easily know the incidence of this depression, which was isolated by any researcher but which could extend into women suffering "post-partum depression" (PPD). Some studies in the United States even estimate it to occur in about 1 out of every 1,000 births.

There are individual predisposing factors to postpartum depression but the lack of social support figures very prominently here. This could support variable may account for cross-cultural differences in the incidence of the depression. In the Philippines, the extended family and compadrazgo means everyone coming in to volunteer help. If you, the problems come from losing your many sources and relatives.

That extended notion is breaking down in urban areas. I suspect poverty, too, can be overwhelming that even mothers are unlicensed and loved, rather than seen as a burden. RH is about setting up the support systems, beyond sexology, for parents, especially mothers of twins.

Tabloid newspapers fill more than page with lurid headlines, and then give the details on page 2. An inside front page. The Cairenes incidents captured only a few sentences (in news, including a young man's suicide. Only bicycle holder confiscated from two motorcyclists, a man in Dumpanan killing two children (ages 3 and 5) and his mother, aged 80. Next to the Calatrava article was an article about Deputy National Security Adviser Luis "Chito" Simon, former Philippine ambassador to Israel, who was appointed by the press conference allegations of violence against his former lover-to parents. If you look hard, you'll find there's RH law in some of the other stories.

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'Flawed judgment' confirmed

LETTERS

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE COLUMN of Amando Doronila titled "Flawed judgment." (Inquirer, 8/17/09) In that piece, he said that "In many ways the architects of the legacy of the Arroyo presidency cite concrete achievements in the economy and infrastructure development as demonstrated by the glaring downsides in the areas of governance, human rights violations, and abuse of power."

I would like to substantiate such statement with certain facts. The NSCB data show that poverty incidence has leveled off at 33 percent—32.9 percent during the period 2000-2006, yet the GDP grew by 4.4 percent in 2000 to 7.2 percent in 2007, which is the highest in 25 years. This is explained by the fact that the economic strategy is focused more on the industrial and service sectors and has neglected agriculture on which the poor are largely dependent. An Ibon Foundation report, titled "Jobs 2001 revisited: Performance against targets" (Ibon data, 7/26/09), noted that "the net income of the Top 1,000 companies in the Philippines increased 480 percent between 2001 and 2007... from P116 billion to P686 billion. In 2006, the net worth of the 20 richest Filipinos—including cronies Lucio Tan, Enrique Razon Jr., Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. and Enrique Aboitiz—was P803 billion ($15.5 billion), which was equivalent to the combined income for the year of the poorest 15.6 million Filipino families. (Forbes Asia, 9/08)."

The above economic data, which are reflective of a situation unbearable to the majority of the Filipino people, directly correlate with the downside in governance performance. The World Governance Indicators (WGI), released by the World Bank, ranked us here more than 200 countries based in the six dimensions of governance, a percentile ranking of 500 percent is the highest while a zero percentile ranking of 0 percent is the lowest. For the second year period 2008-2008, there is a significant reduction in the percentile ranking of the Philippines' for political stability and absence of violence/the country's received percentile ranking of 11 to 11; for voice and accountability: 56 to 41, and control of corruption: 42 to 27.

The studies condensed in several economic fact sheets (Ibon poverty and falling income are critical drivers) around violent conflict. It is only by changing the current economic and political situation into a better one through broad-based approach in making policies and decisions that we will elevate the end of violent conflicts happening in depressed and poor areas of the country.

—ERNESTO CARDENAL
cdonaboo@yahoo.com

Don't amend Negros ordinance banning GMOs

THE PHILIPPINE NETWORK OF FOOD Security Programmers (PNFSP) is disappointed with the efforts of Negros Occidental's provincial council to amend an ordinance banning the entry of products with genetically modified organisms (GMOs). (Inquirer, 8/26/09)

We reiterate: GMOs are not a healthy solution to hunger. We also agree with the NoGMO network's position that the strengthening of Negros Occidental's livestock and poultry industry should not include importation and production of animal feeds derived from GM crops due to health and security problems among GM-fed animals and increased deadly toxins entering their offspring.

NoGMO adds that since GM crops are bred to animals, the GM material in animal reproductive tissue refects human health concerns.

The ordinance that declared Negros Occidental GMO-free was a landmark resolution, and we hoped that many provinces would follow Negros Occidental's example and promote organic farming. It is not only sustainable agriculture, it is also safe and, in the long run, less expensive for farmers.

However, pressure from livestock and poultry growers have pushed the provincial board to propose amendments to a vital ordinance. Amending the ordinance will halt the gains of Negros Occidental and will likely undermine the food crisis that the country has experienced.

PNFSP challenges the officials of Negros Occidental to withdraw the amendments to the ordinance and keep their province GMO-free. Opening the province to GMOs will have a disastrous effect on agriculture as non-GM crops and livestock can easily be contaminated with GMOs once these are allowed to enter Negros Occidental.

PNFSP calls on other local officials and organizations to oppose the proposed amendments. We must all be vigilant in the campaign against GMOs. We should work towards a GMO-free country and uphold all efforts at organic farming and other forms of sustainable agriculture.

—ISA LORENZO,
research and documentation coordinator,
Philippine network of food Security Programmers (PNFSP),
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Across the NATION

Cagayan to have int'l airport soon as P1.65-B deal signed

By Jhoanna Ballaran
Inquirer Visayas

TUGUEGARAO, NUEVA VIZCAYA—The Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (Ceza) on Tuesday announced its signing of an agreement with a private firm to build a P1.65-billion international airport in southern Cagayan to be operated by Laoag International Airport Inc.

In a statement, Ceza chairman Raul Lambino said he and Rodito Noonan, president of Cagayan Land Property Development Corp. (CLPDC), signed a 50-year lease and operations agreement to build the airport in Lasam, Cagayan.

Construction is expected to start this month, he added.

Ceza is a government-owned and controlled corporation that develops and manages the 54,000-ha Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport (CSEZFP), an economic and tourism hub in the coastal towns of Santa Ana and Aparri in Cagayan.

"An international airport with international facilities and equipment is necessary to make CSEZFP a viable freeport and tourist destination in Asia," Ceza said.

Under the agreement, CEZA will invest P685 million, or 41.7 percent of the total equity, while CLPDC will contribute the remaining P966 million or 58.3 percent.

Established in 2000, CLPDC is composed of CMED Construction Inc., US Land Development Inc., TCED Engineers and the Spanish firm Asesores y Consultores Internacionales S.L., which will manage the operations of the airport, the Ceza statement said.

The airport, which will be built near Barangay San Martines and Dagupan in Lal-lo, is seen "to provide better connection to the rapidly growing economic hub from the rest of the country and the world," Ceza said.

The project involves the construction of a 2,200-m long, 45-m wide runway, aircraft aprons, taxiways, parking areas, aircraft hangar, passenger terminal building, control tower, fire station, and other airport facilities.

It will also include a terminal with a floor area of 1,000 sq m, ground access and human interaction accommodations, an aircraft simulator, and a control tower.

Ceza cited figures from the Air Transportation Office (ATO) which listed 2,554 foreign visitors from Macau and China by way of chartered flights to the Tuguegarao City airport in 2008.

As an investment hub, the CSEZFP has become the "preferred site" of 46 foreign and domestic investors, of which 40 were already operational as of August 2009, Ceza said.

He said the airport would play a vital role in the freeport's operations, since CSEZFP can be accessed by land travel that requires at least 12 hours on the road.

While flights to Tuguegarao City are available, the freeport is still four hours away by land.

Melvin Glenton, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Floods won't let Zambales get rest

By Robert Gonzaga and Anselmo Roque
Inquirer Central Luzon

OLONGAPO CITY—Heavy rains caused by Typhoon "Labuyo" flooded sections of this city and other parts of Zambales on Tuesday.

The floods that hit at least nine Olongapo villages were the most severe since 1997, said Angeline Layug, chief of the city disaster management office here.

"We have not seen something like this since 1997. The river is low, this overflowed fast, and there is a lot of flooding in the city," he said.

Layug said the floods swamped the villages of Barretto, East Bajac-Bajac, Gordon Heights, Pag-asa, Old Cabalan, Mabayuan, Kalaklan, Kalalake and Barrio Barretto.

He said more than 70 people, mostly from Sta. Rita and Old Cabalan, were taken to the Olongapo City National High School while other flood victims chose to seek shelter with their relatives in other parts of the city.

Landslides

The rains, Layug said, also triggered minor landslides that blocked a road and damaged at least one house.

Employees of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority at the Subic Bay Freeport were allowed to go on leave on Tuesday due to the flooding in Olongapo, where most SBMA workers live.

Almost 80 percent of the city's employees are affected by the floods. That's why SBMA's workers chose Freedom from whom until in companies inside the freeport," said SBMA Administrator Armand Arreza.

Arreza said the SBMA had sent rescue teams and relief goods to Olongapo City.

In other news, 145 families were taken to evacuation centers due to heavy rains that caused the water level in the town's rivers and creeks to rise, Mayor Roger Yap said.

He said flooding began in one municipality, prompting the evacuation of residents.

This was the second wave of evacuations in the town following the massive flooding three last month.

Barotac evacuees

The 149 families will join the hundreds of families from 19 Barotac villages still staying in six evacuation centers in the town.

"It is hard to say exactly because we have not preadicted all of the areas yet. As of now, I can say that farmers and crops worth more than P1 million were damaged in Barotac," he said.

He said about 300 houses were destroyed and another 1,000 needed repairs.

In Nueva Ecija, roads have caused by heavy rains blocked a portion of the national highway in Cabanatuan City and Science City of Muñoz.

Romulo Cesar, chief of the Department of Public Works and Highways's second district in Nueva Ecija, said mud and rocks washed down by rainwater from the mountain blocked the highway in Barangay Pulilan at about 12 p.m. Monday. With a report from Leonardo Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

FAMILY GRIEF
A family from Bulacan, Bulacan, brings a cat on wheels to rest as they await the burial of Eraño Manalo, the late leader of the influential Iglesia ni Cristo, at the group's central temple in Quezon City
MIKE ALQUINTO

NEWSBRIEFS

LEGAZPI CITY

Workers suffer burns

Workers suffer burns

THREE workers of Coconfused Coconut Corp. in Barangay Pawa, Camalig, Albay, suffered burns after hot coconut suddenly burst from a machine and hit them Friday.

The three were rushed to the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital (BRTTH) in neighboring Daraga town.

The victims were identified as Wilma Gomez, 38, Edwardo Ripa, 33, and Melchor Arabia, 28, all residents of Barangay Pawa.

In July, the Department of Labor and Employment Bicol said a team of investigators to determine whether there was faulty installation in boilers of the steam brought in a worker allegedly fell into the company's roller crusher. Roy M. Abaid, Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM

Shabu raid nets 3

POLICE arrested a couple and their 31-year-old mother inside their home in Lumban, Laguna, where ten sachets of suspected shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) and a .38-cal pistol were also found.

Senior Supt. Marcelino Latoza, Laguna provincial police director, identified the suspects as Gelcinio Lanting, 33, his wife Elmer, 38, and daughter Avian Jolard, 45, who were arrested in the village of Maytalang Ilaya on Monday.

Marvin Cleto, Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN PEDRO, Laguna

Car thieves held

FOUR suspected car thieves were arrested in Laguna briefcase, a police official said Saturday.

Senior Supt. Marcelino Latoza, Laguna provincial police director, said in a text message that suspects Rommel Dantis, alias Agustinus Andoncel (his real name certain Francis John (the name) arrested in San Pedro City around 11 p.m. The suspects are residents of Lucena City. Marvin Cleto, Inquirer Southern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY

Man kills kids, mom

A MAN said to be under the influence of illegal drugs attacked and killed his two children and his mother in Asingan, Pangasinan, on Thursday, police said on Saturday.

Chief Insp. Domingo Eden Aquino police chief, said Benito Acosta, 35, without any provocation, bludgeoned his children—Jonas, 5, and Kristine, 3—with a coconut husk then beat his mother Rosario Sabel.

Eden said Acosta's mother, Marcelina, 56, came to the child's house and found her daughter-in-law still conscious in the head, lying by in the ground.

Police said Acosta, still a fugitive, then went out of the house and chased his wife Amelia, 28, when he saw her. It was then, Eden said, that policemen and barangay officials arrived in the area.

But Acosta, after seeing the policemen and village officials, climbed his neck with the knife he used to kill his children and was taken to a hospital in Urdaneta City. Gabriel Sardiniola, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Army: Corrupt execs behind priest's slay

By Rachel Jeruta
Inquirer Visayas

CATARMAN, NORTHERN Samar—Corrupt public officials here could be behind the assassination last Saturday of Catholic priest Cecilio Pelito Lucero, according to military officials.

Lucero had been very vocal against anomalies in the local government that could have raised some public officials and led to the priest's murder, said the 803rd Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army in a statement Tuesday issued through Maj. Melecio Cardillo.

Cardillo, however, refused to name names.

But Chief Insp. Oscar Anchuvas, operations chief of the Northern Samar police headquarters, said police have yet to identify the killers of Lucero or determine the motive for the killing.

Lucero was driving his van with two others when they were waylaid at 8:30 a.m. last Saturday by at least 10 armed men in Dita Parish, Barangay Lapinig, San Jose town.

His police escort, PO2 Eugene Cuasito Bandoy, and a civilian companion, Isidro Villan, also suffered several gun shot wounds and are still in the hospital.

Villan is in critical condition.

Col. Arnulfo Marcelino, 803rd Brigade commander, said both culprits in parish Jose Burgos's Army rebels that the military initially believed were behind the murder.

Lucero was chairman of the Task Force to Peace and Order and convenor on human rights of the Diocese of Catarman.

He will be buried in Gamay, the town where he was born, but there was no date set for the burial.

In Manila, the Philippine National Police announced it was creating a special task group to investigate the killing of Lucero.

The Samar regional police office formed the special task group on Monday composed of regional investigating units, crime laboratory, forensics, intelligence and mobile groups.

Eleven former Sto. Rosa Executives, regional chair of the Peace and Order Council, also strongly condemned the murder of Lucero. With a report from Joey Gabieles, Inquirer Visayas and Nerve Quinsayas in

Rebs attack Catanduanes hydro power plant site

VIRAC, CATANDUANES—At least 20 suspected New People's Army rebels stopped work on the construction site of the Diamond Water & Electric Co. (Diawec) including, San Miguel, some 15 kilometers from the capital city on Monday, police said yesterday.

Residents refused to pay the so-called revolutionary tax imposed by the communist rebels in the area, said Senior Insp. Samuel Villarosa, municipal police chief.

Quoting one unidentified worker, Villarosa said the 100 workers of the site were forced to stop their work at the Sohang mini-hydroelectric power plant located in the mountain above the barangay where the rebels arrived.

The rebels, who were armed with a .45 caliber machine gun, Carbine and M-16 rifles, conducted the force to a dump truck, backhoe, jeep and a drilling machine before descending into the winding mountain road.

Villarosa quoted the worker as saying the rebels came at past 9 a.m. as several workers passed concrete into a dam wall.

The attack lasted for about an hour, while the rebels commanders firing shots in the air while accompanying the workers in the winding road, added the worker.

An auxiliary unit of the Army's Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) and a team from the 22nd Cadre Battalion, led by Sgt. Zaldy Gonzales, were sent to secure the three-mini hydro power operations being built by Transmerc in Barangay Sohang and Bagatabo in San Miguel town and in Barangay Bitanan in Caramoran town.

Police said this was the first time the mini-hydro construction sites came under rebel attack since work began last year.

Transmerc is hoping to finish the 2-megawatt Sohang plant by December this year.

The plant would deliver power to at least 10,000 consumers belonging to the Pilot Consolidated Electric Cooperative Inc. (Peleco). Bernie Gonzales, Inquirer Southern Luzon

GOVERNMENT soldiers examine the guard for communist rebels aboard a helicopter during recent military offensives in Bicol. Rebel attacks, however, continue as well, despite military claims of major rebel defeat in recent months. AFP/CENTCOM PUBLIC AFFAIRS

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

A TALE OF TWO CHURCHES

In Betis, more than a visual wonder

By Tawera Grupo
Dagupan, Pangasinan

FROM A TREE EMERGED A church that is now a national cultural treasure. In almost six centuries, that was how the St. James the Apostle (Santiago Apostol) Church had evolved. Locals simply call it Betis Church and their saint, Apung Tinpo.

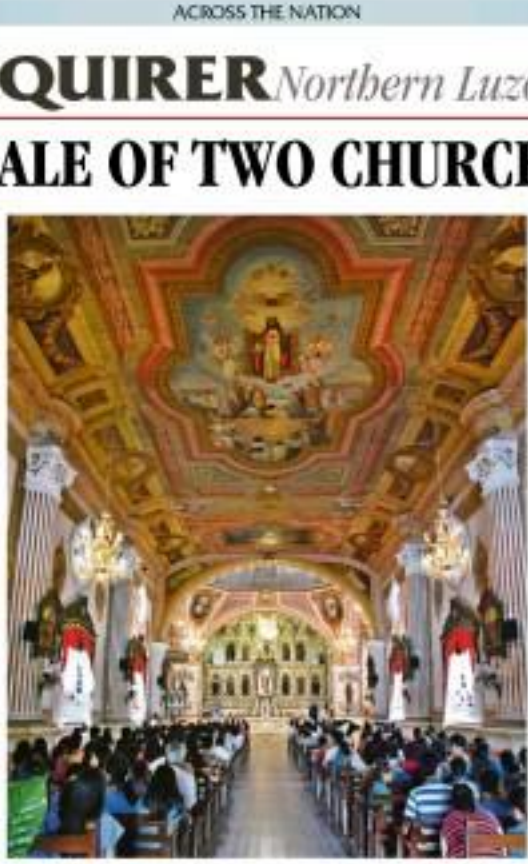
On July 25 when the National Museum installed the marker declaring the church to be the country's 32nd parish priest Emil Difio-an Jr. (left) leads folk right in the center of the line.

Difio said the generations of Catholics since 1572 made this all happen because they lived their faith in God by creating a caring, industrious and freedom-loving community out of Betis.

"This received the unrelenting efforts of Barbarians to preserve our spiritual and cultural traditions ... We affirm we are stewards of our [cultural] inheritance [heritage]," Difio said after National Museum Director Corazon Alvina headed a glass encased certification to San Francisco Archbishop Ramon Arguelles and Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio David.

For what Difio called a "great event," the archdiocese celebrated a Mass and emblazoned a new altar while parishioners showed up, complete with a musical band and a feast of the best local cuisine.

Steeped in the tradition of dueling, eccentricity pitched in, giving us our canons of mind, logic of vegetables and labor to show the church, Difio said.



Tree

Delving on the history of the church and Betis as home to woodcarvers and sculptors, Difio said the church stood as a marvel that remains popular among young and old folks.

A Betis tree (Bauhin betis Blanco) is said to stand in what is now the site of the church. That tree was so huge that it cast its towering shadow all the way to a town called Ili-ili, Dumbo.

It was from the lumber of that tree that the church obtained the wood for the beams, frames and floor, Sandoval said. "Many owners it with the primary industry in the area—woodcarving," she told to a booklet on the church's history that was distributed during the event.

David, a native of Betis, said Augustinian missionaries intended the Betis Church to be first a "visita" (satellite) of Binalonan, Pangasinan, but the people of Betis "refused to be subjugated."

They wanted their own church, Sandoval said, and since they were "industrious and artistic," they built it.

VISITORS view the Betis Church on the Santa Cruz Chapel site in the accompany-demand to every part of the church. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Two months before the festivity, nature played a cruel joke

Wood and time of nearby Bauhin and Lubao.

First made of light materials from 1572 to 1812 during the time of Fr. Fernando Pinto, the church grew into a "solid-as-brick" (stone house) in the time of Fr. Jose de la Cruz, an architect and engineer.

"It took around 100 years to finish this church because the missionaries relied mainly on volunteer work from a number of residents of Betis (around 3,000 by 1612)," David wrote in the booklet.

> The Betis Church has shaped the faith and culture and traditions of the community

He devoted eight pages to detail the "visual collection" found in the walls, ceilings, doors, main altar and practically every corner of the church. The Stations of the Cross were arranged in chronous pattern in the shape of a cluster.

Sanctuary

Tapping local artisans, the missionaries told the church's coatings in elaborate and rich motifs. Thus, visitors with trained eyes have called the Betis Church the Sistine Chapel in this part of the world.

For Carmelo Jose Mendoza, 77, the Betis Church is a sanctuary of the people.

During Isbalat War II, during the great flood of 1972 and during the climate strengths by Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991, the people of Betis sought refuge in the church.

"The shared history of good and bad times kept the community intact even as Betis and its sweet villages were successive Imagina town in 1994, said Mendoza.

For all these, David said Betis Church is more than a visual wonder. "It has, undeniably, shaped the faith and the culture and traditions of our small community," he said.

Restoring Bolinao's pride

By Yolando Sorolo
Bolinao, Pangasinan

JULY 25 WAS A BIG DAY FOR residents of the coastal town of Bolinao, Pangasinan, as they celebrated the quadricentennial of the St. James the Great parish church.

Church workers started to erect funds a year before the celebration to restore damaged parts of the main structure and the convent. Partly put, the dilapidated convent and the abandoned adoration chapel were fixed and refurbished in time for the church's 400th anniversary.

But two months before the festivity, nature played a cruel joke. Typhoon "Emong" battered the town, blew away the roof of the centuries-old church and exposed the wooden trusses and the ceiling. Rooflets and exposed to the elements, the already repainted convent was damaged again.

But the Catholic faithful were undeterred and went on with the celebration.

Flex Bacolas, vice president of the Parish Pastoral Council, said they held the activities at the town's sports complex. But when the festivities were over, workers faced the enormous task of restoring and rebuilding both the church and the convent.

Restoration work

Fr. San Pascual Jose Jeremiah Gilo-ob who started the restoration work on the church when he served the town in 2008.

"I asked parishioners what the plan was for the church's 400th anniversary. But I was informed there was none and that most old got knew that the church was nearing 400. So we started to make plans for the grand celebration," Gilo-ob said.

Gilo-ob, whose prior assignments were to new churches, was captivated by the old-world charm of the Bolinao Church, which was built using corals and limestones.

"This is the oldest church in the diocese so it is worth restoring. It is one of the few old churches whose original materials are still intact," he said.

The Bolinao Church, he said, is the only church in the country with three insignias or its façade—the top most still represents Queen Isabella II, the middle for the Holy See (Vatican) and the third, for the Spanish governor general.

Gilo-ob tapped for the project three engineers and an architect who have experience with restoration of old churches and buildings.

He said the first case removed was the adoration chapel near the church's entrance. It was used as storeroom of images in the past years.

There used to be a baptistery in the middle of the chapel where church members found plenty of coins because parishioners had wanted it to have a wishing well.

Treasures

Concrete was scraped off the convent's walls to reveal its original ancient silo—made reveals as some part and limestones on other parts. Coats of paint were also removed from the wooden parts.

Gilo-ob found painted wooden cabinets and eight windows and ordered them restored. He also found an antique table which he liked and resigned until the original finish appeared.

"There are plenty of treasures in the church. For example, the decorated antique table is being bought for P1 mill. (one by a collector), and the eight windows, for which I spent P480 for restoration, are being bought for P250,000 each," he said.

Many collectors wanted to buy even the church's massive doors for P500,000 each. He declined all offers.

When it was decided that most tissues would be used to replace the decaying wood, some residents opposed the plan as they wanted the old wood restored.

But that is easy to impossible. First, most of the original wooden beams were decayed and rendered unusable because of age and exposure to heat and rain when the church's roofs were blown away by the recent typhoon.

"We want quality and we have to consider the safety of churchgoers," Gilo-ob said, noting that several wooden trusses fell and destroyed the marble altar table.

The Bolinao Church, according to church records, was built in 1609 when residents transferred to the present town site from Santiago Island (Binabalian), the original settlement area.

The church had the tallest tower in Pangasinan at 25 meters (75 feet) but accordingly, a 1788 earthquake damaged it. In 1819, fire razed the convent.

At the center of the altar is an image of St. James the Great, Bolinao's patron saint, on horseback.

ST. JAMES the Great, the town's patron saint, is an imposing image at the church's altar

THE 400-YEAR-OLD Bolinao Church in Pangasinan

SPORTS
Editor Tonichi Sicangco • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

PACQUIAO

Manny shifts focus at last, flies to US today

By Ron Lozorea

IT'S BACK TO BOXING AT LAST FOR SU-perstar Manny Pacquiao.

Having completed most of his show business and political commitments, the 30-spins-pound-for-pound king will leave today for New York City to prosecute his showdown with Puerto Rican WBO welterweight champion Miguel Cotto on Nov. 14 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Pacquiao and Cotto will meet at the new Yankee Stadium on Thursday (Friday in Manila) in the initial stop of the Nate Peterson-starring in the United States and Puerto Rico.

From New York, Pacquiao and his entourage will fly to Cotto's hometown in Caguas, where the Puerto Rican slugger trained initially for his title defense.

Pacquiao and Cotto will clash at a catch weight of 140 pounds, an idea dated to appear at the AT&T Park in San Francisco during an intermission in the Major League baseball game between the Giants and the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The fighters will then proceed to Beverly Hills in Los Angeles on Sept. 14, after which they will part ways.

Pacquiao, the early 2-1 favorite to claim his sixth official world crown, concludes his whirlwind appearances in the US on the Fox, a cable in San Diego on Sept. 13, during the game featuring the San Diego Padres and the Arizona Diamondbacks.

He is expected to return to Manila the same day to take a brief rest and to wrap up his commitments before starting his training in Baguio City.

Cotto, who has been whipping himself into shape since Aug. 3, will proceed to Tampa, Florida, where he will hold training camp for the unsighted pay-per-view bout.

Though Pacquiao has yet to start his preparations, he told sportswriter on Friday that he feels fine at 135 lb and that the remaining eight weeks will be enough for him to hit peak form.

NBA-PBA clash 'sure war'

Jabbar, Guiao expect competitive legends' match

By Cedelff Tipon

EXPECT LITTLE PLEASANTRIES when the NBA Retired Players League goes up against a team of PBA Legends and current all-stars in the NBA Asia Challenge at the Araneta Coliseum on Friday.

"Basketball is in both of our cultures and I expect that the level of play [here] has gotten better," NBA legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar said yesterday at a press conference in Makati. "I expect a good game, competitive."

Jabbar, who will serve as assistant coach of the Generations team, will be joined by four other legends, namely Dominique Wilkins, one of the best shooters in NBA history; Tim Hardaway, who was the crossover dribbler in trademark jersey; Vlade Divac, a wily center who is also known for his court vision, and Robert Horry, a clutch shooter who has won more NBA titles than Michael Jordan with seven.

There was no promise of long minutes for the four retired players, although coach Rey White did not dismiss the possibility.

Much of the amount will probably be given to young players like Derrick Rose, Marcus Haislaid, Chris Ellis, Lenny Smith, BJ Thomas, Russell Robinson, all of the NBA Development League.

"Ideally, they play in the first and third quarters," White said of the legends. "But it will depend on how much fun they are having.

"The most important thing is to see the legends here. Throw the scouting out the window, let them guys have fun."

Greg Dunn, who will handle the PBA squad, vows to put up a good fight.

"For as long as we're playing, we'll try to beat them," Dunn said.

Adding another layer to the NBA assemblies on Friday will be professionals by the Silver Era, the season of the New Jersey Nets, and the Nets' Dunking Dons.

Horry expects an appreciative audience on Friday following the "great reception I have ever seen" when they visited in the country on Monday.

"Fans just love basketball players regardless of their generations," he said.

NBA Legends Dominique Wilkins, Tim Hardaway, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Robert Horry and Vlade Divac field queries in yesterday's press conference at the Fairmont restaurant in Makati. PHOTOGRAPHER

Lions seek No. 12 vs teetering Chiefs

By Cedelff Tipon

ARELLANO UNIVERSITY TRIES TO REGAIN its footing in the Final Four berth when it takes on defending champion Jose Rizal today in the NCAA Cubao basketball tournament at the FEATI University gym.

Game time is 4 p.m. with the Lions looking to climb their 12th straight victory and a re-peat of their early 102-74 win over the Chiefs in the first round.

In the other game, St. Benilde, still nursing hopes of earning the Final Four, seeks payback against San Sebastian Knights Agustinian College at 2 p.m.

The Blazers are in semis jitter with a 4-6 slate, while the Generals are already out of the Final Four contention with a 2-10 record.

Philippine Airlines is also from Solution in the semifinals. The Stags finished the first round four heats with a 10-4 win over the Manila-pan Cardinals Monday.

The Chiefs looked solid a couple of weeks ago as they rode on the crest of a five-game winning run, before back-to-back losses to Letran and San Beda (Undefeated their chances of advancing to the next phase.

Though their time is no longer in their hands, Arellano coach Jimjie Atkins has not lost hope.

"I keep telling my players there's still hope and we're just keep on fighting," Atkins said.

The Chiefs, however, have a succession to climb as they need to win their remaining five games and hope that the Knights lose their remaining outings.

STANDINGS

	W	L
Arellano	8	2
San Beda	7	3
Letran	6	4
Perpetual	5	5
Lyceum	4	6
JRU	3	7
Mapua	2	8
San Sebastian	2	8
CSB	1	9

GAMES TODAY
(FEATI Gym, Cubao)
4 p.m. Arellano vs Jose Rizal
(Game 1 of Arellano's 2 of 2)
2 p.m. San Sebastian vs CSB
(Game 1 of San Sebastian's 2 of 2)

SPORTSWATCH

US stint for URCC aces planned

THE COUNTRY'S FIRST MIXED MARTIAL ARTS (MMA) players will have the chance to display their talents in the United States and probably compete in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) by the end of the year.

This is as the initiative led by MMA players, said Ace coordinator Jason Ibal was known. "Undercard Manila Combat Championship (URCC) president Mon Aguilar said in yesterday's PSA Forum at Shakey's Malvar. "By the end of the year, we hope to bring our finest players to the US."

Aguilar is hoping to send one of the winners in the URCC Lightweight Challenge on Saturday at Ibal. Vernon Bonilla Jr. in Makati to the US to join further exposure.

SJC anniversary derby Rd 2 today

SOME 60 SWIMMERS ARE ON THE POOLSIDE IN THE second round of elimination in the 4th Anniversary Hiking Derby today at San Juan Coliseum.

Derby officials who will screen those who will get to return at the P200,000 top prize and qualify for the final round on Saturday.

Aged 10 years to 100 years old the swimmers, with the champion bundle getting P15,000 and the other P10,000.

Tac breaks mark, gains 16th SEAG stint

VETERAN NATHANIEL "TAC" PADILLA broke the national mark for pistol second last weekend to land eight other shooters who have qualified for the Philippine in the 25th Leos Southeast Asian Games this December.

The 45-year-old Padilla, general manager of Bala Pacific-owned Sigtas Cooking Oil, fired 577 points to top his old mark of 572—actually the same score posted in the 2007 Bangkok SEA Games medalist Ashfar Hadia of Malaysia.

Padilla, who won his first international gold medal in the Brunei-Asean Junior championships in Mexico City when he was only 12, will compete in his 16th Games in Laos, also a record.

The other shooters who achieved the criteria required to earn slots for the Laos Games are Caroline Gonzales (Pepsi); Ernesto Concepcion (Mendoza); Eddie Thomas Orcajo; Ronald Mejares; Ali Eje Robert Daniel; Dimitri Garcia; Glenda Chua; Lolito Olgado; Rodel Sumido (Marines) and Miss Padilla (Assumption).

Gonzales, Ricardo and Miss, all products of Philippine National Youth Development Program, surpassed silver medal scores of the last SEA Games in the 25-meter air pistol team event, while Padilla, Mejares and Donaire have consistently bettered the gold medal tally of the last Games in the 25-meter standard pistol team event.

"I feel I'm in good shape so we never chose to the SEA Games," said Padilla.

NATHANIEL "Tac" Padilla checks a record appearance in the rapid fire pistol event.

Dual title card mulled for Viloria, Sonsona

VILORIA

A FIGHT CARD FEATuring Brian Viloria and actor-physician Marvin Sonsona may be held in the country next year.

Viloria, the reigning International Boxing Federation junior flyweight king, revealed in yesterday's PSA Forum that Sonsona intends to promote another big fight card in February with him and Sonsona, the newly crowned World Boxing Organization junior bantamweight titlist, as headliners.

On April 19, Viloria and fellow 9-0 fan Hiroto Dosaka fanned their respective opponents in a highly successful dual world title fight at the Araneta Coliseum.

Sonsona, who is still recovering from a bout with shingles, kept his IBF flyweight title with a fourth-round knockout of Japanese Pinoy Hidekazu while Viloria disfigured Mexican Ulises Solis with an 11th-round stoppage.

The 34-year-old Sonsona entered the WBO title fest four days ago in Ontario, Canada, serving a unanimous decision over 36-year-old veteran Jose Lopez of Puerto Rico.

Sonsona, who is also a licensed physician, vowed a fight for his friend in the country, citing the need to establish a big base here.

Next in line for Sonsona, however, is a return appearance in Canada in November.

"They liked seeing him well in Canada, so he's scheduled to go back there for his next fight," said Gello-ani, who was with WBO executive Lou Dimarello and trainer Joe Agapito during the Fantastic Four sponsored by Shakey's, Asrol, Pepsi and Strider Energy.

Ray Lozorea

Lady Pirates reach cage, volley finals

By Bernice S. Aurario

QUEZON DISPOSED OF ITS HOMEFOE, QUEZON Jose in basketball and volleyball Sunday to end an impressive double championship stint in the 45th PSPCAA tournament.

The Lady Pirates routed the Blue Technological U Technocrats, 80-49, in the St. Michelites gym, and will face a fourth straight title against College of St. Benilde beginning Sept. 20.

Rookie Lianne Hermanis paced Lyceum anew with 14 points and Aduar Gendan backed her up with 13 markers. The win was Lyceum's ninth straight in as many more.

The Lady Maroons, who lost to the Lady Pirates during last year's finals, took out the St. John Holmes, 77-61, in the other Final Four duel.

In volleyball which Lyceum has dominated for the past nine seasons, the Lady Pirates routed the San Beda Alabang Red Lions, 25-15, 25-13, 25-16, at the RTE gym.

JRU ended the other best-of-three championship semi-ends 2-1, 25-19, 25-9 sweeping of Mapua.

University of Asia and the Pacific awaits next Sunday's winner between La Concordia Manila and Mapua in the battle for basketball finals.

Cedric Rocha, first finalist in Senior B volleyball, will take on either UAAP or St. Scholastica.

In junior matches on Saturday defending champion Mapua and College Girl Rizal Col. logo senators each got a ticket to the finals.

Mapua dumped St. Scholastica, 25-14, while CGRC, which took a lower of advance last season, bested Jose Rizal, 30-47.

Pinoy 'seniors' win three games in BF hoops

THE PHILIPPINES GOT OFF TO A perfect start, winning its three opening matches in the 50 and 60 years divisions in the 18th Asean Senior-to-Basketball League-BF Cup Monday at the Muntinlupa Basketball gym in Muntinlupa City.

Backstopped by former PBA MVP winner Freddie Hubalde, Lee Austria and Edward Tiu, the Filipino Chinese Amateur Basketball Association (FCBA) led charged Brunei, 58-46, in the 50-years-and-above division.

Austria and Hubalde joined the Best Line-managed FCVBA squad with nine points while Tiu chipped in five more.

Later in the Filipinos made known their desire to win the premier division of the five-day, three-division tournament.

FCBA's victory in the 60-and-above age class was more impressive as it romped to a 68-22 win over Building (Malaysia).

Willie Kuan-co Shaw's Tony Que, Zosimo Tan and PBA legend Lim Eng Beng led the Filipinos, who also dominated the game right in the first half.

The Philippine Chinese Friendship Basketball League also triumphed, beating Malaysia, 56-35, in the 50-and-above division.

Edwin Kuan Shawni Fernando and Hershey Moyo Martin Fernando paced the opening of the tournament.

Oudin does it again

American teenager reaches q'finals via upset; Federer notches 38th straight US Open win

NEW YORK—AMERICAN TEENAGER **Melanie Oudin continued to build momentum in her surprising run to the US Open, joining three other women qualifying for their first Grand Slam quarterfinals.**

The 17-year-old Oudin rallied for a 1-6, 7-6 (2), 6-3 win over 15th-seeded Nadia Petrova of Russia on Monday to take her place in the final eight.

Also there for the last time are Caroline Wozniacki, Kaia Kanepi and Victoria Azarenka. If all, none of them are getting any less confident. Serena Williams is still in the draw.

For all that, it is the 75th-ranked Oudin who has dominated the attention at Flushing Meadows.

"Not for a change that somebody's coming up on her haven't heard about much before," said men's No. 1 Roger Federer, who downed No. 24 Tatsuma Ito of Spain on Monday to win his 38th straight US Open match.

Oudin's next opponent is No. 9 Caroline Wozniacki, a 19-year-old from Denmark with more wins on tour than anyone this week, and more over-impressive than Monday's. She's the only seeded player remaining on a side of the draw that has reduced to run to eight.

"Hopefully," Wozniacki said, "someone from the crowd will cheer for me."

In the fourth round, most of the cheers belonged, of course, to Oudin.

Against Petrova, she stayed off two game points that would have put her behind 5-3 in the second, improving her record to six wins from seven of Grand Slams—Wimbledon and the US Open—this summer to matches where she's lost the first set.

At Flushing Meadows, she has beaten No. 4 Elena Dementieva, No. 10 Maria Sharapova and now Petrova, all Russians and all in come-from-behind fashion.

"Time doesn't matter if she's winning or losing," said her father, John. "She doesn't seem nervous out there—and I don't know where that came from."

Wozniacki beat No. 6 Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia, 2-6, 7-6 (3), 7-5 (3), in a late match, eliminating the only remaining player on that side of the draw with a title. Said Sloan from across the Atlantic could.

If anyone all four of those quarterfinalists have every right to believe they could make it to the finals.

"Right now, I think she'll play Serena in the finals," said Oudin's twin sister, Bethanie. "We're not going anywhere."

Yes, it seems, in Bolton, where 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 victory over Robredo was an indelicate, a bruising one requiring the fourth round. He is seeking to become the first player to win six straight titles at the American major since Bill Tilden in the 1920s. AP

MELANIE Oudin soars for realism in celebration after sealing Nadia Petrova in an upset victory that reduced twin sister Bethanie (left) to tears of joy. —

SPORTSWATCH

Stricker moves past Tiger

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS—Steve Stricker delivered back-to-back birdies to top Tiger Woods and win the Deutsche Bank Championship on Monday, moving past Tiger Woods to the top of the FedEx Cup standings.

One week after missing a 10-foot putt to force overtime, Stricker rolled a 15-foot birdie on the 17th hole, then hit a dominant chip to top to range on the par-4 18th for a 4-under 67 one-shot victory over Jason Dufner and Scott Verplank.

The victory was his third of the year, and moved Stricker to a career-high No. 2 in the world ranking. Before set, he has a $500-point lead over Woods in the FedEx Cup with two tournaments remaining. AP

Olympic boxing weights cut

MILAN—THE INTERNATIONAL BOXING Association (AIBA) announced on Monday it is trimming from 11 weight categories to 10 for the 2012 London Olympics.

The move was made Monday to accommodate women's boxing at the games. However, the IOC said there will still only be 286 boxers in the Olympics, 250 male boxers and 36 female boxers, for Beijing 2008, the 286 boxers were all males.

The new categories are: Light flyweight (46 to 49kg), flyweight (up to 52kg), bantamweight (up to 56kg), lightweight (up to 60kg), light welterweight (up to 64kg), welterweight (up to 69kg), middleweight (up to 75kg), light heavyweight (up to 81kg), heavyweight (up to 91kg) and superheavyweight (91kg and above). AP

Euro: Serbia upsets Spain

WARSAW, POLAND—SERBIA CAUSED a huge upset early on world champion Spain 66-57 Monday on the opening day of the European basketball championship.

The Serbs used a 19-4 run in the last few minutes of the first half to open a 38-22 lead at the break.

Centre Ivica Savage Colonga with Silvano, small-head Rebers, 12 Alexander Djordjevic. Defending champion Spain also went to opening jumping and to already lead against Lithuania and then holding off scale challenge for win, 81-68, behind 24 points from American-born Kelly McCarty and 12 points from Sergey Bykov. AP

PACTOLERIN

ICTSI golf: Rain toughens Riviera course

By Mesang K. Casilio

ARAMI, CAVITE—IT WILL BE A TRULY DIstinctive test of golf when the ICTSI Riviera Challenge tees off today at the Lanyer layout under even tougher and tougher by intermittent rains in the last few days.

The heated duties, par-71 course, the site of the Philippine Open won by Gerald Rendon at the turn of the decade, will be even more intriguing to the scales of participants that will join the country's biggest men.

"If the weather doesn't change and you manage a one-under for three days, you'll win," former IST Open champ Robert Factoran told the Internet in Filipino after a visit came in yesterday's Pro-Am event.

The lobster is one of the favorites in the P1 million event with Jerry Pagunsan, Frankie Minoza, Mars Pamti and Angelo Que all set contract.

Pagunsan and Minoza are playing in the Japanese Tour while Pamti is seeing action in the Macau Open. Que just finished tied for seventh on Monday in a European Tour event in Switzerland.

Elmer Salvador is the one coming into the tournament with momentum, having won the Davao-sizzling last July and seeking to become the first player to win back-to-back events in the circuit.

An amateur title would be an interesting delights, with the members of two prominent names...the ICTSI and National Golfers' Open progenitor—fielding their sides in the event.

SAMSON LIM

ALLAN CAIDIC

RICKY BROWN

HECTOR CALMA

PBA salutes 4 former aces

By Cedelff Tejan

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION executive announced the third batch of inductees to the league Hall of Fame on the Big Four former superstars and the late commissioner Emilio "Sec" Ermita.

Top attractions of the league during their prime, Samboy Lim, Allan Caidic, Ricky Brown and Ricky Brown headline the seven-man honor roll that will be feted on Oct. 9 in a special awards ceremony at the posh Shangri-La hotel in Makati.

Seven-time first league winner Bobby Jacobs also made the honor roll, along with former PBA chief Emilio "Manoling" Ermita.

PBA chair Leo Alvarez of Barger Ring presented the honorees at the Phil Pocan yesterday at Makati's EDSA avenue, Manila.

Alvarez said the honorees voted through a rigid selection process undertaken by the selection panel that included league commissioner Sonny Barino, former chair Joaquin Tolentino, PBA board member Tony Chua, sports editor Ding Marcelo of the Manila Bulletin and Soldiers' Inkmaker of the former veteran sportswriter and Tempo assistant editor Tito Talao, and long-time broadcaster Andy Jao, who heads the Hall of Fame's nomination committee.

The honors committee then determined the final seven-man list was headed by former Olympic Enterprise head Robong Mitra.

"So far, there are 22 players and personalities who have been inducted—twelve in 2005 and 10 in 2007," said Alvarez. "We getting difficult to select personalities who deserve and are worthy to be called Hall of Famers."

Among those who are already in the Hall of Fame are Robert Jaworski and four-time PBA MVP Ramon Fernandez who were both part of the initial batch.

The second batch included Abet Guidaben, coach Baby Jacobs and former project director Eduardo Cojuangco.

The PBA holds its Hall of Fame selection every two years.

Chan said the league is lobbying moves to California-based Boosey, the 1997 PBA MVP, to name two such personality receive that plaque.

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In defense of Japeth

HEART, SOUL, SPORTS
DANNY GARCIA

THE RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLE "Yo, Japeth, Go!" went way beyond expectations.

Obviously, the article ignited in a nerve. This article ignited me to communicate with people I have never met but who valued as much as I value them. This is what makes me want to touch out to people and non-athlete whom I call their mind.

With their permission, I'd like to share with you two of the responses that I received beforehand.

"I am writing from Chicago where I have been for [illegible] to have seen Japs. Japeth I guess. He was a gangly skinny guy because when I first met him almost 10 years ago.

"I have become close to the family specially his dad Jesse and Imelda Arias, with whom I shared Bible studies every other Sunday. That much I can say. It is to just like any other outing that, turned to be indeed, what always has the best intentions and efforts to protect his son.

"Thanks to a God-having, devout Christian family that will never say anything bad about other people—no matter what. God is the center of their lives and everyone and their parents look to him for the final guidance.

"It pains both Jesse and Jessie to hear of bad press about their son. Of course, whatever people they have encounted their growing years in—in their physical absence—want to take advantage of their son's new success.

"Japs is still the same shy soft-spoken individual who still deserves to be rightfully proud of. He deserve to be encounted with humble and nameless fame a better chance to chase an impossible dream.

"He has never been cocky nor full of himself. He values his fans for his God, country and family to patronize fervor for his profit.

"There is a love-couple bond[illegible] his encounters on-stages, just happens being together. Thus, why should he have himself into a situation he knows he will never be happy.

"The love you never obtained like some of you claim she is never a factor of his, however in the average world that's not true. He is happiest with cheerleading his band, showing new dudes and moves. He is happiest when he is ready to leave.

"It pains me to think how people high places can treat simple folks who are charged of human beings.

"Eric Menimore was quite nice even to his interviews and I am one with him in saying, 'Go, Japs, Go!'"

—Joel Ramirez

"Hindi siguro ako aware sa day to the Tenorio-Enot known as whatever you wrote and I quote:

"The sequences, led by the fast Miguel Cuaderno, were seen to ask to get whatever they want.

"Sir, Silvanus, I am an avid and die-hard fan of local basketball leagues dating back to the inaugural MICAA of sometime where I watched the likes of Carlos Loanzon, Nano Tolentino, Carlos Badion, Lonnie Carbonel, Tony Gerata, Ronnie Bernardo, Ed Ocampo and the list of the later who belonged to the Golden Years of Philippine basketball.

"My love for the game spiked now to the Philippine basketball association where the MICAA loomed out, but it entered when, in 2009, it took over the MVP and Rookie of the Year awards and we re-watched now.

"The fact that on the coffin cannot redeem the unlucky happened! Our sequences caused him PBA status.

"Sir, Sec. Miguel Cuaderno! Not Miguel Brin, Sinobos Sin Miguel Cuaderno and Cocoa Cola Bottling Co. of the Philippines.

"Sorry cause, I only get to watch the PBA when non-campaign season for fighting for this circus pleasing."

—Manuel Abdiel Gappe
[illegible]@yahoo.com

Thank you to all the people who wrote, revised and personally called.

Send comments to community@inquirer.com.ph

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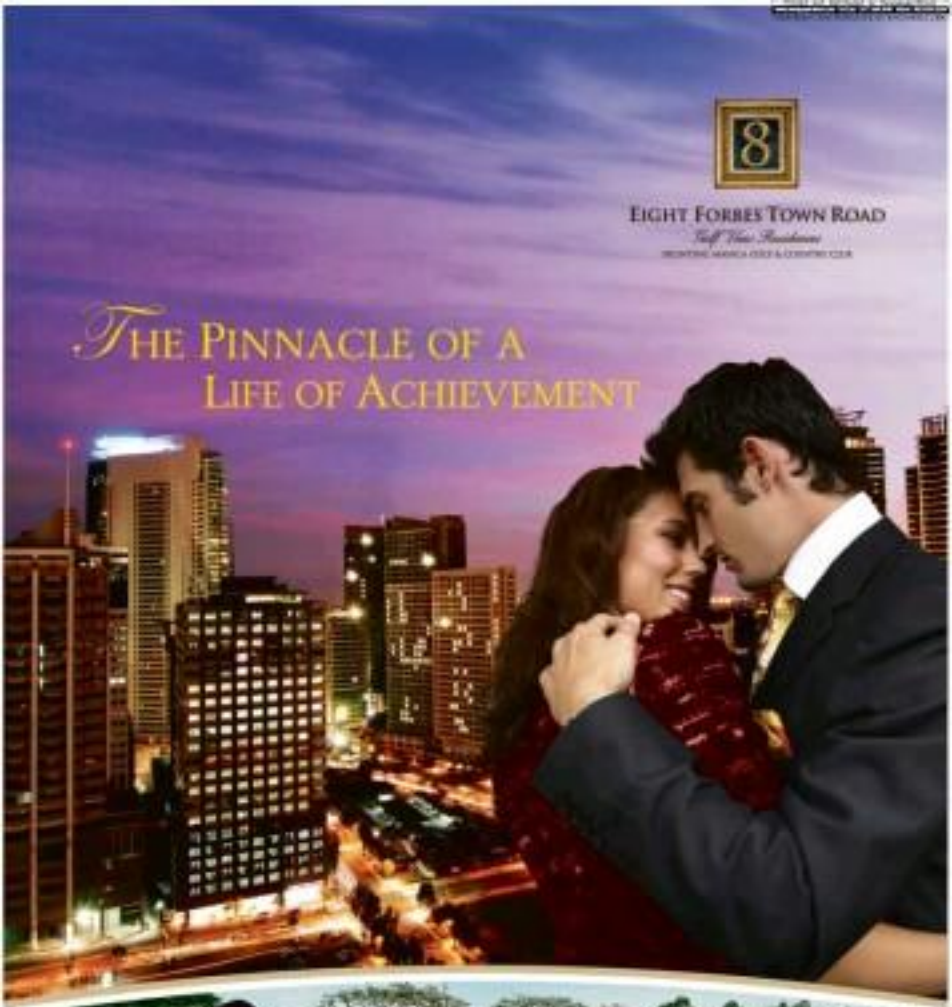

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GREAT RATES SALE

SSS files complaint against TV host

For nonremittance of workers' contributions for 6 months

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) HAS filed charges against a television host-dancer after she allegedly failed to remit her employees' contributions to the agency.

In a one-page complaint affidavit filed recently with the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office, the SSS accused Regine Tolentino (Regine Vera Perez in real life) of violating provisions of the Social Security act of 1997.

Based on SSS reports, Tolentino is the owner of Regine's Children's Wear, a clothing store for kids, which is located at 47 Victoria St. in Bonanza Dumaraog Legi, Quezon City.

The complaint was filed on Friday by account officer Marilou Gonzales of the SSS Legal Unit in Cubao.

In her affidavit, Gonzales said that her duties included inspecting employers' records to determine whether or not they were remitting their workers' contributions to the agency.

No SSS payments

She added that their records showed that Tolentino did not remit her employees' SSS contributions from August 2007 to January 2009 which totaled P211,950.80.

TOLENTINO to trouble with SSS. JOAN PAZ

According to Gonzales, she sent a demand letter to Tolentino informing her of the violation on Aug. 17 last year.

She also said that she paid the extra effort to remind her of her obligation and to give her copies of the agency's records of her company's SSS remittances.

She added that despite her efforts, Tolentino failed to comply with the agency's request for her to settle her obligations as mandated by the SSS Act of 1997.

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HARLENE BAUTISTA

METROBRIEFS

Boxing champs lauded

MANILA Rappler Athlete Lim honored 65-kg light-flyweight king Omar Villena and newly crowned WBC junior bantamweight champ Wilfredo Gomez for setting a strong example as ambassadors of the city yesterday, Gomez, 53, won the WBO title, last on Saturday following a 12-round unanimous decision victory over Jose Lopez of Puerto Rico. Villena, on the other hand, recently successfully defended his title against Mexican Jesus Vega by knockout. Following a joint press conference at Manila City Hall, Villena and Gomez were separate open pick-up trucks for the parade, which took them around the city's major thoroughfares. Lim, who also ruffled Villena and Gomez with cash incentives, said he would ask the city council to declare December 10 as Ambassadors of Manila. (Rio Alma contributor's story is on page 2) Basil Zafra

NO-SUN FUN Kids enjoy a game of street basketball on C.M. Recto, Manila, despite a heavy downpour JOY R. NICOLAS

Rizal gov't suspends Cuerpo's coaccused

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

AFTER IMPLEMENTING THE suspension order issued by the Sandiganbayan against Rodrigue Mayor Pedro Cuerpo, the Rizal provincial government has also served the suspension order issued against his two aides.

In a report to the Sandiganbayan, Rizal provincial legal officer Rolando Rivera said copies of the suspension order which the antigraft court issued last month have already been given to municipal engineer Fernando Cruz and Bonifacio barangay chair Salvador Bautista.

Cuerpo and the two men are facing charges of grave abuse of authority and gross misconduct for the allegedly illegal demolition of houses built by 83 families on a property in Barangay Burgos in 2002.

The suspension order against Cuerpo was served on Aug. 24. He has appealed the ruling with the Supreme Court while Vice Mayor Josan Cruz was appointed as acting mayor.

Cruz, meanwhile, issued memorandums to Bello and Bautista, directing both "to refrain from performing the duties and functions of your public office and accordingly to turn over said position to your legal successor."

Police arrest suspect in film critics' killings

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE POLICE HAVE ARRESTED a man believed to be involved in the robbery-killing of a Filipino-Canadian film critic and his Slovenian girlfriend.

Supt. Gerardo Bautista of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (QCPD-CIDU) yesterday identified the suspect as Danilo Jesus Ilo, 47, an employee of the couple.

Bautista said Jesus' statements implicated accomplices on Monday at the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office. He faces murder and robbery charges.

Alexis Tioseco, 29, and his live-in partner, Nina Rubino, 30, who was also a film critic, were shot dead on Sept. 1 after they arrived at their condominium unit near the Tomas Morato area in Barangay West Triangle, Quezon City.

The robbers then fled using the couple's Ford Lynx car which was later found abandoned on West Avenue.

Police suspected that a new housemaid, Cristelda Gresnan Dayag, let the robbers into the house.

Jesus, another infant hand, was one of the drivers to the truck hauling furniture of the couple who had a contract with a gas company.

QCPD-CIDU operatives arrested Jesus in the truck hauling Ilo's garage in Tagaig City on Saturday afternoon.

"The suspect has remained mum on his participation in the crime and has refused to tell us other information of his companions," Bautista said.

Police said they arrested Jesus after a witness spotted him alighting from the couple's car on West Avenue on the same night Tioseco and Rubino were killed.

The couple's other maid, Magdalena Pesigan, told the police that the robbers took two laptop computers, three cell phones, a Nokia watch, two digital cameras, two video cameras, an iPod, two bags, P30,000 in cash and an undetermined amount of dollars.

Bautista said they were still searching for the other people involved in the robbery-killing, including Dayag.

Pesigan, who said she had been with the couple for three years, recounted that at around 10:40 p.m. on Sept. 1, she was watching television when Dayag asked for permission to get some and buy something from a nearby store.

When Dayag returned, she was accompanied by three armed men who tied up and gagged Pesigan before locking her in the maid's quarters.

Pesigan said she heard the suspects shooting the couple.

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1.25M poor get medical aid in one day

By Julie M. Aurelio

SOME 1.25 MILLION POOR FILIPINOS were given medical aid in just one day through the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office's free medical and dental services held simultaneously throughout the country last Tuesday.

In a statement issued yesterday, PCSO General Manager Rosario Uriarte said the tally is only 60 percent complete and that they expect to hit their two million target for the "100 Persons in One Day" medical mission project.

She attributed its success to thousands of volunteers who mingled in the medical areas all over the country despite the heavy rains brought by Typhoon "Labuyo."

"We extend our deepest gratitude to these nameless and faceless volunteers who left the comforts of their homes, on a Tuesday, just to play Good Samaritan to our less fortunate countrymen. It only showed that volunteerism is alive and that Filipinans are ready to come to the aid of the poor and the needy," she said.

Based on partial reports, the PCSO succeeded in providing direct medical and dental services to 1,250,928 Filipinos who showed up at the simultaneous nationwide medical missions.

The project, which the PCSO earlier said was a possible candidate for the Guinness records, was the first simultaneous medical mission PCSO conducted as part of its 73th anniversary celebration.

More than 100,000 volunteers, including doctors, nurses, dentists and health workers, were fielded to more than 2,000 medical missions sites all over the country.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro with Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office Vice Chair and General Manager Rosario Uriarte during the institution's 73th anniversary celebration Tuesday. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Based on PCSO field reports, Uriarte said an overwhelming majority of those who served came from the island groups of the Visayas and Mindanao with almost one million beneficiaries.

Southern and Central Luzon had more than 300,000 beneficiaries served, while Metro Manila had more 75,000 beneficiaries. Southern Tagalog and Bicol region had at least 50,000 beneficiaries, Uriarte said.

The PCSO held its 73th anniversary yesterday with President Macapagal-Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro as the guests of honor.

Uriarte said they also got volunteers from parish councils, church-based organizations, local government units, hospitals, rural health clinics, military police and civic organizations.

"It was People Power harnessed for the benefit of the ordinary citizens," she added.

Each site was manned by four doctors, two dentists, four nurses, two pharmacists and between 30 and 40 volunteers.

Aside from general checkups, minor surgeries like the removal of lumps, dental services, eye examinations, bone scan and ear check-ups were made available to selected medical mission sites located in government hospitals and rural clinics.

Senior Asean delegates forget aches to play ball

By DJ Yap

FOR THESE 50-SOMETHINGS, GRAYING hairs and elbows are not a problem.

An invitational basketball tournament for the middle-aged and elderly has begun in Marikina City, attracting several dozen delegates from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Some 300 participants from Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and the Philippines will join the 10th Asean Veterans Invitational Basketball Championships, officials said yesterday.

The five-day tournament, which aims to build goodwill and camaraderie among middle-aged and senior citizens, consists of three categories: 48 years and over, 58 years and over, and 68 years and over.

During the opening rites at the Marist School basketball gym on Monday, Marikina Mayor Maritess Fernando said the tournament was part of the city's efforts to promote itself as a venue for both local and international sports competitions.

"We hope that hosting this activity will further reinforce our city's positioning as the country's major sports hub. Sports development is integral to our city's development journey," she added.

The participating teams include Brunei Basketball Association, Malaysia Kuala Lumpur Veteran Basketball Club, Malaysia Kuching Asteroid Senior Basketball Association, Singapore New City Sport Club, Thailand Bai Yit Basketball Club, Filipino-Chinese Veteran Basketball Association and Philippine Chinese Friendship Basketball League.

The awarding ceremony will be held on Sept. 13 at the Marikina Convention Center, officials said.

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- The lightest/dreadful task in your way to work?

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P.S.

INQUIRER

Pasig cops stop robbery attempt, arrest 2 suspects

By DJ Yap

THE POLICE FOILED A ROBBERY in progress and caught two of five men who tried to hold up the passengers of a jeepney before daylight yesterday in Pasig City.

Arnaldo Lachica, 24, and Jayson Morata, 18, both residents of Barangay Barangay Pinagbuhatan, were arrested as three of their accomplices escaped, investigators said in a report to Pasig police chief, Senior Supt. Napoleon Villegas.

Based on the report, the incident occurred at 1:40 a.m. yesterday when the five men declared a holdup in the passenger jeepney driven by Nelson Ali on the westbound flyover of Ortigas Avenue Extension in Barangay Ugong.

Armed with knives and an improvised shotgun or "sumpak," the robbers took the cash and valuables of the passengers, four of whom were identified as Alexander Tagore, Ryan Jerome Loyola, Mark Anthony Beato and Edwin Grace Encanto, all call-center agents.

But the commotion attracted the attention of police officers who were patrolling the area.

They chased the robbers but caught only Lachica and Morata as the two men's companions, identified only as "Wenel," "Bogoy" and "Rita," escaped, the report said.

The officers recovered the passengers' cash and cell phones, as well as the weapons used by the two men.

Lachica and Morata were later taken to the Pasig City detention cell.

"We're now trying to get all the information we can from the suspects so we can catch their companions," Villegas said.

DID YOU KNOW

As of 10, there were about 120,000 Chinese residents in the Philippines, a third of whom (40,000) lived in Tondo. Others resided in Binondo, Quiapo, Malabon and Pampanga. CyVC - Researchers, Inquirer Research

Woman who drowned in bay identified

By Jeannette I. Andrade

HOMICIDE INVESTIGATORS YESterday identified the woman who drowned with her alleged lover on Sunday afternoon on Manila Bay after a big wave swept them out to sea as they were fishing on the breakwater.

Manila Police District (MPD) homicide section head, Chief Insp. Erwin Margarejo, said the woman was Cosmin Bartolome, 46, a resident of South Cemetery in Sta. Cruz.

She was identified by her son, Charlie, who went to the forensic parlor to claim her body.

However, the body of the man, identified only as Alan and a resident of Juan Luna Street in Binondo, remains unclaimed.

A witness said he was walking on Sunday afternoon on the breakwater near the Manila Compound in Port Area when he spotted the couple fishing on a rock.

A big wave then hit the two, sweeping them out to sea where they drowned.

Alan's body was found two miles away, while Bartolome's turned up the next day.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

On behalf of the Iglesia ni Cristo throughout the world, and of the Manalo family, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who expressed their sympathies and joined us in our bereavement over the passing away of the Executive Minister, Brother Eraño G. Manalo. Your compassion has brought comfort to us and to all the members of the Church of Christ.

EDUARDO V. MANALO
Executive Minister

Coca-Cola's HALIKA! Caravan Visits La Union

PHILTOURISTS covered in sun for a good cause during Coca-Cola's HALIKA! Caravan in La Union last August 12, 2009

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China to begin vaccination vs A(H1N1)

BEIJING—CHINA WILL SOON vaccinate its citizens against the A(H1N1) flu as the potentially deadly disease has entered the peak season with rising community outbreaks and severe cases.

Detailed inoculation plans have not yet been released but orders should always be the top concern, according to the State Council, executive meeting presided by Premier Wen Jiabao on Monday.

As the total cases reached 9,392 on Monday afternoon on the mainland, the virus has been confirmed in all 31 provinces and autonomous regions including remote western Xinjiang, Ningxia and Tibet, which reported its first cases over the weekend.

The virus will spread more quickly from cities to countryside and sixteen more people in the community level, said Feng Guang, a senior epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

The week-long national holiday is nearing, when an estimated 200 million Chinese will be on the move. Railway and aviation departments are being ordered to devise contingency plans in case of outbreaks.

They also urged health departments to beef up prevention and control efforts for the 60th National Day Celebration.

About 100,000 student volunteers in Beijing ordered to participate in the celebration will be running the first group to be vaccinated against the A(H1N1) flu. These inoculations are part of the precautionary measures mandated by the Beijing Health Bureau to make sure the event, involving more than 200,000 people, remains free from the pandemic.

"They will probably get the shot first within the month," she told China Daily yesterday. The exact date of the inoculation will be determined by local authorities, she said.

Xin Fuzhen, 20, a sophomore with the Beijing Shijingshang Vocational College, said she would like to have the shot when it is ready. She's one of 3,000 more college who will be in the parade.

The first two million doses of the A(H1N1) vaccine of a five-million order issued by the government will be ready during September, according to Liu Peisheng, media relations director with the Beijing-based Sinovac Biotech Ltd., one of the 10 designated A(H1N1) vaccine producers in the country.

Central government officials vowed to prepare vaccines for 5 percent of the entire population by the year's end. (China Daily/Asia News Network)

A LAB technician works at the Chinese biotech firm Sinovac in Beijing. Sinovac has secured government approval to produce the country's first homegrown swine flu vaccine, which it says is effective after only one dose. AP

French kiss 'la bise' goodbye amid swine flu

PARIS—IT'S A UBIQUITOUS French tradition, as familiar as a baguette or an espresso at the neighborhood cafe. Now "la bise," the kiss-by-cheek peck that the French use to say hello or goodbye, is the latest casualty under pressure from a globalized threat: swine flu.

Some French schools, companies and a Health Ministry hotline are telling students and employees to avoid the social ritual out of fear that the cheek-to-cheek could make it the kiss of death, or at least illness, as autumn approaches.

Montreal Forum has so far only scrapped three entire flu deaths. The fully is worse in French southern hemisphere holidays some six months, the Paris Pacific festival of Nouvelle Calédonie, with seven deaths and 10,000 cases overall, according to local officials.

Across France, authorities and school officials are taking few chances—while trying to avoid alerting panic when the academic year started last week. In recent months, a few schools in France have been temporarily shut after cases of swine flu emerged.

But kids in two schools in the town of Guérande, in France's western Brittany region, the first lesson of the virus came from local officials: no more cheek kisses to teachers or other students.

"I asked the children not to kiss anymore," says mayor Hubert Erlingsen, cited by phone. "I felt that the protections sought... as much hands-on, barely not flavor and handkerchiefs around, and not tough any old way—had no meaning if we let the kids keep kissing."

"It seems we were the first town to do so," he said. It's just part of an effort to adopt new and more mature habits, and there's no punishment intended for those who do exchange kisses, she added.

As a playful alternative, some teachers in their town have set up "bise bones": Papier-mâché bowl-shaped paintings inside before they're exchanged in class, Tanguy said.

Many in France see a threat to cherished customs.

"Before flu has already changed our life," read the headline of an article in Marianne's Le Parisien about banning the kiss.

The national government isn't calling for a ban. But the Health Ministry, on its swine flu phone hotline, recommends that people avoid "close contact—including shaking hands and giving kisses."

A secretary website on the pandemic recommends avoiding "direct contact" with people, including shaking hands or covering the face" of others...especially sick people.

It advises keeping a two-meter buffer zone as a minimum, or wearing masks if that's not practical. Haven't specifically mention kisses.

"These are recommendations, not requirements. People are free to do what they like," said a hotline operator, who said he was not authorized to give his name. The press officer for the ministry's health department didn't return calls seeking comment.

The government's main threat is to encourage people to wash their hands frequently and to cough into their sleeves or sneeze...not into their hands—when the urge is unstoppable.

Some are going even further. City hall officials in the western town of Coulaines said Mayor Christophe Boudin has issued an ordinance banning kissing in public—a first in a country known for its love affair with the practice.

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Central government officials vowed to prepare vaccines for 5 percent of the entire population by the year's end. (China Daily/Asia News Network)

Nato confirms civilians died in Afghan air strike

KABUL—THE NATO-led force acknowledged for the first time on Tuesday that Afghan civilians were killed in a German-ordered air strike last week on two stolen fuel tankers, and that top commanders appointed a team to investigate.

A statement from the Nato-led force said its commander originally believed the raiders were surrounded only by Taliban insurgents, but that a subsequent review showed "civilians also were killed and injured in the strike" sullied in by German commanders and carried out by United States fighter jets. Previously officials had said only civilians may have been wounded.

The top US and Nato commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, appointed a General-an major general to lead the investigation, Agustus A.U.S. Air Force officer and a German officer are also on the investigating team, the Nato-led force announced. The make-up of the investigation team was important because the incident involved both German and US forces.

Taliban militants have used attacks like the one on Friday in northern Kunduz province to rally support among villagers angry at international forces.

McChrystal has said military officials could use about 10 hours to ascertain the number of civilians killed in the attack. US military spokesperson Capt. Elizabeth Mathis said.

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The chief of Kabul's criminal investigation department, Abdul Ghafar Sarandoyla, said three Afghan civilians were killed and six wounded.

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said a suicide car bomber rammed into a Nato convoy and destroyed three Land Cruisers. AP

Seoul demands apology from North Korea

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREA demanded yesterday that Pyongyang apologize for the accidental discharge of water from a dam that swept away six South Korean campers along the Imjin River.

North Korea said on Monday that it discharged water to avoid a sudden rise in water levels and that it would notify the South in advance should it plan to open floodgates in the future.

The South immediately expressed discomfort at the North's "unconvincing" explanation, which did not mention the casualties it caused.

Seoul took a step further yesterday by demanding an apology and sufficient explanation from the North.

"With regard to the loss of our citizens' lives, our government demands a sufficient explanation from the authorities responsible in the North and an apology," Unification Ministry spokesperson Chun Hae-sung said in a statement announced at a press briefing.

"We first had to find out what caused the release of water, and now that the North has acknowledged its discharge, we decided we need an apology on that part."

In response to a question on what the government plans to do if the North refuses to apologize, the spokesperson said it would be inappropriate to comment on assumptions.

Hwang presented the bill to the North's officials. South Korea fared relatives for failing to pursue the tourist.

Kim Sung-ho, chief of the ruling Grand National Party's policy committee, said in a floor meeting yesterday that it was a unmistakable disaster, calling for investigation to reprimand those responsible.

The authorities' silent system did not get off despite the sad, dire cries in some levels, and the military, which first detected it, failed to promptly notify the government or take other measures to evacuate the campers.

Some 40 million tons of water from the Hwanggang Dam gushed through the Imjin River, which flows out to South Korea's west coast, burying six people dead or missing, officials said. Three bodies have been found so far.

About 1,000 police and rescue workers yesterday continued to look for the others along the Imjin downstream of the campsite.

There has not been much rainfall in the southern part of the river since July 26-27. (By Kwon Mee-hi/Asia News Network)

SOUTH Korean soldiers and rescue workers search for missing people after a dam discharged millions of tons of water into the Imjin River near the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas in Yeoncheon, damaging many six people in the south. AP

19 killed in Iraq bombings

BAGHDAD—SEVENTEEN people died across Iraq on Monday in a spate of bloody attacks, including a suicide car bombing that killed eight at a security checkpoint in the former shiite stronghold of Ramadi.

The day's death toll expanded the terror wave since the bloodiest daily month of Ramadan began more than two weeks ago and left dozens more wounded.

Monday's attack in Ramadi, a predominantly Sunni Arab city and capital of Anbar province, happened at around 6:30 a.m. local time, a security source, requested, a police official told AFP.

"There were four security force members and four civilians among the victims," he said, adding that 12 civilians and two police were wounded.

Ramadi, a city of around 540,000 people and around 100 kilometers west of Baghdad, was a key insurgent base in the aftermath of the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime by United States-led forces in 2003.

Salim, Iraq's biggest province, was the theater of a brutal war between on the streets of Ramadi and Fallujah, which several years along the Euphrates river valley became al-Qaeda bastions and have seen hundreds die insurgents.

But since 2006 Sunni tribes have sided with the US military and Iraqi security forces cited as rebel fighters have been ejected from the region. AFP

US man arrested in connection with killings

MILWAUKEE—POLICE HAVE arrested a man they believe is connected to the slayings of nine women dating back to 1988, based on a DNA sample he provided last week.

Mikhel T. Ellis, 46, was taken into custody after a struggle at a motel on Tuesday, police Chief Edward Flynn said on Monday. Ellis was charged with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide. More charges are expected, said Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm.

Police said Ellis' DNA was found on the bodies of nine women who were killed between 1988 and 2007 on the city's north side. Investigators believe eight of the women were prostitutes and were murdered. They ranged in age from 20 to 42.

Flynn said police sent a request to obtain Ellis' DNA on Friday as investigators had to move quickly to test the evidence because Ellis knew they were looking for him. He was arrested in nearby Franklin.

"Good police work and good police science led us to Walter Ellis," Flynn said. "These cases come more than 20 years old, never forgotten."

Online court records show that Ellis pleaded no contest in 1998 to a reduced charge of second-degree reckless injury. He served three years of a five-year sentence, Flynn said.

Chisholm said he knew whether Ellis had an attorney. A message left with Ellis' previous attorney was not immediately returned on Monday.

A brother of one of the victims said earlier Monday that his family had carried a great burden since his sister, Joyce Winn, was strangled in 1997 at the age of 41.

"We just hated that it had taken so long for them to find her killer, those women's killer. But you know, justice one day is better than no justice at all," said Terry Williams, 49.

Betsy Meadow, investigators had said they believed one person was responsible for seven deaths. Police now believe he's connected to the deaths of nine more women who were both strangled.

Flynn and Chisholm announced a new investigation into murder cold cases that occurred in Milwaukee ago after DNA evidence linked seven deaths to one person.

Police said then that they were stepped investigating that case, but created a major breakthrough when DNA technology suggested the same person was responsible.

The investigation produced breaks in other cases after detectives confronted numerous DNA samples to the same crime lab in the standard boundaries of registered prostitutes. The work led to progress in at least 10 unsolved killings, authorities said. AP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gloria

UK court convicts 3 Muslims in plot to blow up airliners

LONDON—THREE BRITISH MUSLIMS WERE convicted on Monday of plotting to murder thousands by downing at least seven trans-Atlantic airliners in simultaneous attacks designed by al-Qaeda to be the deadliest terrorist strike since Sept. 11, 2001.

Abdulla Ahmed Ali, 28, Assad Sarwar, 29, and Tanvir Hussain, 28, were found guilty at Woolwich Crown Court in London of leading a plan to detonate bombs on aircraft bound for the United States and Canada, using liquid explosives hidden in soda bottles.

Four other men were acquitted of conspiring to murder passengers, but admitted lesser charges—and in one case conspiracy to murder. An eighth man was cleared completely.

The case brought sweeping new restrictions for air passengers, including limits on the amount of liquids and gels they can take onto a plane.

British and US security officials said the plan was directly linked to al-Qaida and guided by senior Islamic militants in Pakistan.

Authorities estimate that, if successful, about 1,500 passengers would have died. Had the bombs been detonated over US and Canadian cities, hundreds more would have been killed on the ground. Britain's Home Secretary Alan Johnson said the plot would have brought "murder and mayhem on an unimaginable scale."

Other officials said the public expressions would have been immense—likely destroying relations between London and Washington. The case has spur new concerns over the US visa waiver program, which allows citizens of many European Union countries—including Britain—to fly to the United States without visas.

Police officials said they believe the plotters were just days away from executing their already-advanced plans when officers crashed up 25 people in 2006. The arrests led to travel chaos as hundreds of jetliners were grounded across Europe. AP

ALI

SARWAR

HUSSAIN

Taiwan Cabinet to resign en masse

DAFEN—LIU CHAO-HSIUAN, long criticized for flip-flops in his handling of the aftermath of disaster-in-Typhoon Morakot, quit on Monday as premier to take responsibility.

President Ma Ying-jeou, who accepted Liu's resignation, named Kuomintang secretary-general Wu Den-yih as his new premier. Eric Chu, magistrate of Taoyuan County, was appointed vice premier to replace Hsu Chia-tung.

The resignation was widely anticipated.

In a hastily called press conference, Liu said he and his Cabinet will resign en masse on Thursday. The Cabinet is being blamed on May 10 for not having enough preparations and flood warnings.

Accompanied by his spokesperson Ivo Jau-min, the outgoing premier said more than 700 people died in the flash floods and landslides triggered by the typhoon's monsoon rains that struck Taiwan on Aug. 8-9.

"Somebody has to take political responsibility," Liu went on, "the president of the Executive Yuan," he told reporters. "I have to take all responsibility."

He said that he had tendered his resignation to President Ma to end the dispute, while rescue and relief operations were going on in full swing.

Ma asked Liu to stay on.

"So I continued to work to settle the flood victims' who lost their homes and relieve them," Premier Liu said. "In the meantime," he added, "we were preparing all the necessary reconstruction programs."

All the work was completed on Sunday.

Plans to rewrite the victims of Taiwan's worst flood disaster in history are getting under way the premiers pointed out.

"I think I have discharged my duties by the plans of the work of calamities from the worst typhoon disaster and it's time for me to leave office," Premier Liu said.

Then the premier went to ask President Ma to let him go Sunday night.

"The President, who has supported me all the way since my Cabinet was formed, agreed to let me leave," the premier said. "I thank you for his support and for the chance for him given me to serve the people," he added.

He also thanked all civic organizations, religious institutions and company chief executives for helping him complete the relief operations with success.

Hsu's spokesperson Tony Wang called a press meeting almost immediately after the one Liu held to announce the resignation of Wu and Chu as premier and vice premier.

"Both of them," Wang said, "have accepted the appointments."

Wu, who served as magistrate of Hsinchu and mayor of Kaohsiung before his current term as legislator, began forming a new Cabinet, which must be inaugurated before the Liu administration resigns en masse.

"I will do my best to discharge the heavy responsibility entrusted," Wu said. "I will live up to the expectations of the people," he promised. The China Post, Apple Daily, News Network

Afghan vote recount ordered

KABUL—The UNITED NATIONS-backed commission charged with investigating Afghanistan's presidential election said on Tuesday that it has found "clear and overturning evidence of fraud" in the results and ordered a recount of ballots from questionable polling stations.

Widespread allegations of ballot-box stuffing and ramped-up turnout are threatening the legitimacy of Afghanistan's Aug. 20 vote in the country's second fraud results. More than 750 names found charges have been lodged with the Electoral Complaints Commission.

The commission's announcement comes with results from nearly three-quarters of polling stations already released, favoring President Hamid Karzai stands just shy of the 50 percent of the vote he needs to avoid a run-off between him and his main challenger Abdullah Abdullah.

The commission's order to recount votes could add to the uncertainty surrounding the vote. A credible election is seen as critical to the Western-backed efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and win public support for the fight against the Taliban insurgency.

The commission did not say how many polling stations would require recounts, but it added that it had to the identified some with questionable results in Ghazni, Paktika and Kandahar provinces, and that it is launching investigations in other provinces.

Sources showing 100 percent turnout or with a percentage for candidate totaling more than 95 percent of the vote will need to be audited and recounted, the commission said in a statement. Ballot-box stuffing and more than 200 ballots will be exempt from the process.

The commission, comprised of three international members and three Afghans, has the power to order a recount of any ballots with strong indications of irregularities. The international members are appointed by the UN and the Afghans by the Afghan Supreme Court and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. AP

35 dead, 44 trapped in China coal mine blast

BEIJING—AT LEAST 35 people were killed and 44 others were trapped after a gas explosion at a coal mine in central China early Tuesday, the government's work safety office said, reported.

A total of 91 people were working in the mine in Hengfeng, Jiangxi province, when the blast took place in the early hours, the State Administration of Work Safety announced on its website. Fourteen were able to escape, it said.

A spokesperson by the work safety watchdog surnamed Cao told AFP that rescue efforts were ongoing.

Xinhua said that the mine shafts before the official Xinhua news agency reported, quoting Zhang Jiafeng, an official with the city's coal mine bureau.

The explosion came just a few days after Vice Premier Zhang Dejiang called on authorities to improve safety in the country's coal mines—in particular to prevent gas blast accidents, according to remarks published by Xinhua. AFP

My Grand Drive with the Grand Livina

My first big car, well technically not mine personal technically exciting. Eager to mobilize my own business, I loaned downpayment from Dad with a promise to foot the bill for the monthly installments thereafter. The upgrade now was to find a car big enough for my bikey merchandise but stylish enough to drive around town in.

And there it was, sitting pretty in a showroom along Pasong Tamo. It twirled in circles. She was going to be mine. Having had a taste of bigger cars to begin with (as mandated by the family business) I was used to lumbering around the city in utilitarian workhorses. But I vowed that my trusty steed was to be both utilitarian and like my ride! The Nissan Grand Livina in its Steel Gray hue caught me off guard.

Seven seats, ample room at the back, albeit a little lower than what I'm used to but acceptable nonetheless. Cliched as it might sound, you could say the car fit me like a glove, a stylish one at that.

As an added treat I got the Grand Livina with a portable DPE. What's a girl to do, I cleared my schedule, picked up my friends and headed up North to check out the latest hotels in the country's Summer capital.

Upon taking the wheel of the Grand Livina, I immediately felt its comfort. This was not an MPV. The steering was light but still responsive, even the acceleration was so direct it was easy to get carried away at the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway. Were you there were six of us in the car. The thing with I noticed with Nissan cars is that they are floaty, like riding on clouds. Comfort cocooned you from the scary and harshness of the outside world.

Inside was just as comfortable. You can really feel the quality of the materials around you. Plus the large interior made it that much more easy. The Manila and Tarlac-Pangasinan Highway was a breeze. It was so easy to drive and I could see all around me. The huge windows provide ample view of the car and the surrounding is even at night. Plus the lighting is amazingly work, it illuminates the front of the car really well, we were enjoying the fog all the way to the top.

Cruising around Baguio was just as fun. The car is easy to maneuver and park, we got in and out of the shops in a jiffy. Luggage space was no problem, even with friends but I could easily fold the rear seats to have more space.

The whole experience was just beyond ABN+ territory already. I felt like I was in a sedan, a modern powerful sedan that can carry all my load, all my friends and still leave room for more.

Editor Raoul G. Morada • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Forex reserves hit record $41.3B

BSP investments abroad partly led to surge in August GIR

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE COUNTRY'S EXTERNAL LIQUIDITY POSITION further improved in August, with gross international reserves (GIR) climbing to a record $41.3 billion.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the GIR in August was 2.7 percent higher than the $40.2 billion seen in July.

GIR is the total amount of foreign currency reserves and gold held at and managed by the central bank. It indicates the country's ability to engage in commercial transactions with the rest of the world, such as payment for imports and settlement of foreign currency-denominated debts.

According to the BSP, about 74 percent of the country's GIR are in US dollar, 16 percent in yen, 8 percent in euro and the rest are in gold and other currencies.

In a statement, the BSP said the rise in foreign exchange reserves was partly due to the income generated by the central bank from its operations and other investments offshore. The BSP's investments are mostly in US securities.

The increase in reserves more than offset the decline caused by the government's payment of maturing obligations abroad and the drop in gold prices.

The BSP said that the latest GIR would be enough to cover 7.1 months worth of the country's import requirements.

It was also equivalent to 6.6 times the country's short-term external debts based on original maturity and 3.3 times based on residual maturity.

Short-term debts based on residual maturity have maturities of one year or less, plus principal payments for medium- to long-term loans due will mature in the next 12 months.

Inflows of foreign currencies have led to unprecedented growth in the country's GIR, now one of Asia's largest reserves.

According to the Asian Development Bank, the country's GIR was the 18th largest as of 2008, when it stood at $33 billion.

Earlier, the ADB urged central banks in developing countries in Asia to consider investing a portion of the reserves in more productive activities.

The ADB said Asian countries had amassed huge foreign currency reserves, which could be put to better use by funding developmental projects instead of placing them in US securities and other risk-free assets.

But the BSP said it preferred to keep its conservative way of managing the Philippines' GIR.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo earlier said the central bank had a mandate to ensure external liquidity, and so it would continue investing the GIR only in safe instruments.

Guinigundo said Southeast Asian countries have learned from the Asian financial crisis of

FOREX B5

Treasury yields rise across the board

By Reuirel W. Dominguez

YIELDS ON TREASURY bills went up across the board yesterday as the government continued to allow an upward adjustment of short-term rates.

Rate fixes for the Treasury auctioned only P5.499 billion, or about half of its P12 billion offer for the benchmark 91-day T-bill.

Had the BTr made a full award, the interest rate would have gone up by 8.4 basis points to 4.932 percent.

Yields on the 91-day debt paper rose 4.4 basis points to 3.992 percent. The offer was oversubscribed, with buyers tendering a total of P5.269 billion.

In the T-bill auction held two weeks ago, National Treasurer Roberto S. Tan said a "small upward adjustment" in interest rates on short-term government debt papers was justified, especially since the BTr had received tenders during the previous bids.

Also yesterday, the yield on the 182-day T-bill increased by 7.3

TREASURY B5

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Energy firm to pour $1B in wind power projects

By Amy R. Nunez

TRANS-ASIA OIL AND ENERGY Development Corp. plans to invest at least $1 billion for a 600-megawatt portfolio of wind power projects, three times its 30 to-invest prospects.

In a briefing, TA Oil president and chief executive Francisco L. Viray said the company would seek joint venture partners for the 600-MW energy portfolio.

"We prefer our partners, but if that's not possible, we will do (wind projects) by ourselves," Viray said. "We want to be the majority although this will still be subject to negotiations."

The first project under the portfolio, according to Viray is the 54-MW Guimaras wind farm, with an initial capacity of 8 MW.

He added that the wind farm is expected to be commissioned by 2012.

TA Oil planned to infuse an initial $20 million for this particular wind farm project to cover the development of 8 MWs in wind power capacity.

The company would need to spend as much as $2.5 million per MW for the wind farm project, he added.

Viray declined to disclose financing plans for these proposed projects.

The company has recently installed wind measuring instru-

ENERGY B5

Stock rides the presidential wave

THE SHARE PRICE OF Titus Land & Lifestyle Inc. appears to track the standing of presidential aspirant **Manny Villar** in the surveys, according to market observers.

Villar's family largely owns the company.

Analysts said TLL share price rallied as Villar's ratings soared in recent weeks, edging out even the immensely popular broadcaster-turned-politician **Noli de Castro**, as well as former President **Joseph "Erap" Estrada**.

In the last 52 days, TLL traded from a low of P0.67 to a high of P2.90 per share.

But in the opening days of September, TLL's stock price started to drop. Yesterday, it closed at P2.60.

Pundits on the bourse believed this development was largely due to the Sept. 2 announcement of **Mar Roxas**, erstwhile standard-bearer of the Liberal Party, that he was backing out of the presidential race to give way to **Noynoy Aquino**.

The market seems to have believed that TLL's stock the array of Noynoy, who is riding on the name of his dead departed parents' popularity.

Noynoy is now the running 18, let's shorten of becoming CEO of the Republic. — *Boris C. Dandan*

Media shy

BEYOND HR started to shy away from media interviews, following the Ombudsman's recommendation that he be suspended. Social Security System president **Rolando L. Sarreal** took a swipe at his colleagues who appear in multimillion-peso "infomercials."

In a press conference held on Aug. 28, which was also the anniversary of the SSS, Sibal remarked the benefits of the pension fund's existing "for-profit advocacy series starring celebrity father and son **Edu** and **Luis Manzano**.

He said that with help from the "very effective" ads that reduce unemployment benefit contributions and pay their debts, SSS members need not worry about the fund, assuming it—able for the next 30 years or so.

Had she chosen to air how much the campaign cost. But he did say that his "fees does not appear in the ads."

With the right spot he has again found himself to be in. It seems that incompetence—more than educ—pays. — *Roland M. Domingo*

The big move

PETRON CORP will soon make the "big move" beginning November this year.

According to sources, the country's largest oil refiner and retailer has found a new home at the former operations of San Miguel Corp. in Ocean Center, Bataan.

Over 500 Petron employees are expected to fill in the vacant office there.

The move is expected to be completed before the year ends, leaving nearly 17 floors in the current Petron Bldgs Plaza on Buendia.

Employees are guessing that the big move would not only entail swaps, it would also make it easier for management since SMC and Petron were close the same head.

But whatever the purpose, most Petron employees are assuring the Ayalas business more of them in the south. Also, they think that they may not have a place to park their vehicles because the SMC parking area is reportedly already packed.

To solve this, SMC is reportedly looking at leasing a vacant lot along JGB Avenue to expand its parking space. — *Amy R. Borres*

Careless whispers

THE CHIEF representative of a multilateral institution who last had some serious tiff with the government's fiscal managers in the past has again secured their wrath as he was suspected of encouraging hostile investors to the pipeline with other official development assistance (ODA) donors.

Word has reached Malacañang that a senior Asian Development Bank loan to the Philippines may be unduly jeopardized allegedly because this chief had made erroneous claims that the new AOB facility was "crowding out" his institution's own facility and the last straw for local authorities was the suspected dissemination of allegations within the ODA grapevine that the Philippines' poor banking sector record other donors that went less serious on governance monitoring.

Authorities are in flatout at the airport, believing he has committed an unforgivable act of unduly painting a bad picture of the Philippines to various international partners. In short, they want him to be declared "persona non-grata" in the territory. — *Boris C. Dandan*

New Victorias CEO

SOLAIR MILL Victorias Milling Corp. (VMC) has a new president. Hisshiro Tohta, who assumed office on Sept. 1. He took over the post of VMC veteran shortstop Tagara, 74, who, sources said, had been finally begging to be allowed to retire in the past several years.

Beppu who was among the key consultants to VMC's turnaround, will stay on as board member and will remain active in most of the company's social activities.

Tohta, 51, is no stranger to VMC as he has been a board member for about five years. He used to be president and managing director of Consultancy by Technical Corp., a subsidiary of Itochu Corp., a shareholder in it.

Meanwhile, just like in many other companies under the Lucio Tan group, the taipan's disfavored brother Mariano Tanenglian was removed from the board of VMC Tuesday, fetching his withdrawal the authority of Tanenglian to represent it in the board. — *Boris C. Dandan*

IPVG aims to dominate gaming world

By Doris C. Dandan

AFTER RECEIVING A P100-MILLION SHOT in the arm from a foreign subsidiary, publicly listed technology firm IPVG Corp. expects to become the dominant player in the online gaming business by next year.

IPVG recently redefined its core business interests to focus on high-growth, high-margin businesses like entertainment (Internet protocol services and Internet protocol) and content (online gaming and mobile solutions). It is now selling assessors businesses such as those in business process outsourcing (BPO).

"We own a BPO company in Vietnam, which has 300 users and started only six months ago. When the Vietnam operations gains sufficient size and scale, we'll probably look at bringing to another strategic or financial investor. I think it's just a matter of time," IPVG chief executive officer Enrique Gonzalez said in a briefing yesterday.

Last month, IPVG sold a controlling stake in its call center business BPO Teleservices to the POCC group of Song Ho for P22 million, while retaining a 30-percent interest.

IPVG has about P475 million in debt, or less than half of about P1 billion in stockholders equity. It has a cash flow as measured by earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization of about P96.8 million as of the first semester of this year—up by 11 percent over that of last year.

About 73 percent of its revenues currently comes from the communications or data center business, 16 percent from content, and 11 percent from BPO.

Gonzalez said the gaming business would likely account for a bigger share of profits compared to communications, but not necessarily by buying at gross revenues.

He estimated that the group currently had about 2 million active online gamers, or about half of the 4 to 7 million online gamers in the country.

He said IPVG would use the P500 million in fresh capital raised by its CEB Global Yield Fund in IP E-Games Ventures Inc. to gain greater market share.

"We're launching games that will revolutionize gaming. We're bringing to new titles and putting our money where our mouth is. We're bringing in big franchises that the Philippines hasn't seen before and also licensed games," he said.

He added that the Philippine online gaming market had the potential to grow to up to 14 million active gamers.

The group's IP E-Games titles include Rise Online, Cabal Online, Audition Dance Battle and Revenge game Grimoire Heroes.

Philippine Stock Exchange

Currencies

Investment, (Bid) Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.01	1.000000	46.000
Japan	Yen	0.01	0.010000	0.460
United Kingdom	Pound	1.0000	1.020000	46.920
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.1290	0.129000	5.934
Switzerland	Franc	0.9000	0.900000	41.400
Canada	Dollar	0.9000	0.900000	41.400
Singapore	Dollar	0.6450	0.645000	29.670
Australia	Dollar	0.8000	0.800000	36.800
Taiwan	Peso	0.0300	0.030000	1.380
Korea	Won	0.0008	0.000800	0.037
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.2667	0.266700	12.267
Kuwait	Dinar	3.3000	3.300000	151.800
Bahrain	Dinar	2.6500	2.650000	121.900
United Arab Emirates	Dirham	0.2700	0.270000	12.420
Qatar	Riyal	0.2800	0.280000	12.880
Thailand	Baht	0.0300	0.030000	1.380
Brunei	Dollar	0.6500	0.650000	29.900
EU	Euro	1.4000	1.420000	64.400
Kuwait	Dinar	3.3000	3.300000	151.800
Libya	Dinar	0.7500	0.750000	34.500
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.2900	0.290000	13.340
Switzerland	Franc	0.9000	0.900000	41.400
Jordan	Dinar	1.4100	1.410000	64.860
Bahrain	Dinar	2.6500	2.650000	121.900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.7000	0.700000	32.200
Sweden	Krona	0.1400	0.140000	6.440
Norway	Krone	0.1700	0.170000	7.820

Paxys buys Aussie software company

Listed firm gets SeQoya for A$1.2M

By Doris C. Dumlao

AN OVERSEAS UNIT OF THE COUNTRY'S first publicly listed mill owner firm, Paxys Inc., has acquired 100 percent of SeQoya Pty Ltd., an Australian company that provides salary packaging software to employers and market-outsourced salary packaging companies.

In a disclosure yesterday to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Paxys spokesperson Christopher Mabilin said the purchase would be made by the company's wholly owned Australia-based subsidiary SmartSalary Pty Ltd. for 1.2 million Australian dollars.

With the completion of the transaction, SeQoya becomes a subsidiary of SmartSalary, the second largest provider of outsourced salary packaging services to Australia.

In March 2009, SmartSalary also completed the acquisition of Melbourne System Group Pty Ltd.

"As a result of these two acquisitions, the two major Australian providers of in-house salary packaging software solutions are now owned and operated by SmartSalary," Mabilin said.

"These acquisitions enhance SmartSalary's competitive position to uniquely offer both fully outsourced and in-house services in the Australian salary packaging industry. This allows SmartSalary to effectively expand its target customer base beyond that of its full-outsource model competitors," he added.

SeQoya is salary packaging software sales leader used by Australian organizations across all tax entities—non-exempt employers, schools, area health services, public benevolent institutions and fully tax-exempt employers. Its system is also used by a number of boutique outsource salary packaging service covering a range of niche salary packaging areas.

Paxys was originally incorporated on Feb. 14, 1952 as Pil-Hispano Hardboard Corp., which used to manufacture cocoa lea. In 2004, the principal shareholder of Advanced Content Solutions, Inc. (ACSI), a call center company, acquired a control ling stake in Pil-Hispano, effectively making it the first call center firm to be listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

It later changed its corporate name to Paxys, and is now a holding company that focuses on investments in the business process outsourcing industry within Asia Pacific.

Its subsidiaries are engaged in diversified services such as contact center, data transcription, salary packaging and software solutions.

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First Gen to list 405M shares

By Amy R. Nuno

LOPEZ-LED FIRST GEN CORP has filed an application with the Philippine Stock Exchange to list 405 million shares of common stock, which will be issued to cover the 50 percent stock dividend.

In a disclosure to the local bourse, First Gen said the 50 percent stock dividend, which was approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) last month, has a record date of Sept. 14 and payment date of Oct. 7, 2009.

First Gen also disclosed that the conversion price of the company's $260 million, 2.5 percent convertible bonds due 2013 will be automatically adjusted according to the terms and conditions of the bonds following the 50 percent stock dividend.

The bonds are listed with the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Ltd.

Recently, the BIC approved the increase in the authorized capital stock of First Gen to P5.25 billion from P1.40 billion.

The capital stock would be divided into 2.77 billion common shares with a par value of P1 a share, and 1 billion redeemable preferred shares with a par value of 50 centavos a share.

According to First Gen, the SEC had approved the company's amended articles of incorporation, which reflect the increase in authorized capital stock as well as the increase in the number of authorized common shares to 2.77 billion from 1.15 billion shares.

First Gen plans to generate an additional capacity of 400 megawatts from eight geothermal and wind projects in the pipeline.

"First Gen shall focus on developing more indigenous sources of clean and renewable energy," First Gen CEO Federico R. Lopez had said.

MPIC officials off to HK, Singapore to sell shares

INFRASTRUCTURE HOLDING First Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) has embarked on a roadshow to divest up to 30 percent interest in its new shares worth $345 million.

Top MPIC officials left for Hong Kong and Singapore on Monday as part of the company's plan to offer the ownership base of MPIC shares, with the new shares expected to be sold at between P3 and P3.75 each.

MPIC told the Philippine Stock Exchange that the indicative offering size would be P9.8 billion ($200 million), with an option to upsize by another P4.9 billion ($100 million) and depending on market demand, an overallotment option of another 10 percent.

"Thus, the total issuance could reach as much as P14.5 billion ($290 million).

"However, the actual offer price and the size of the proposed offering will only be determined on completion of the road show, depending on investor demand and market conditions," the disclosure said.

The "re-IPO" has the potential to be the largest public offering by a Philippine company since Vista Land & Landscape raised P20 billion in 2007.

MPIC said the offering would do two things for the company.

First, part of the proceeds of the sale would be used to fund MPIC's new investments, including the purchase from its affiliates of a 33-percent stake in Manila Electric Co., the country's largest power retailer.

Second, the sale would help make MPIC's stock more attractive by boosting its trading liquidity.

Based on 9SE data, only 2.7 percent of MPIC's shares are held by the public.

MPIC chair Manuel V. Pangilinan had said he would like to see the public float widen to about 20 percent, to make the company a "real" public company.

Since shifting from a property-and-agricultural holding firm, MPIC has seen a substantial increase in assets and profitability.

As of June, it doubled up a net profit of P1.7 billion on robust performance by its telco (Metro Pacific Tollways Corp.), water distributor (Manila Water Services Inc.) and hospital businesses.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Senate of the Philippines through its Bids and Awards Committee invites all duly accredited contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following goods, contracts and other items:

	DESCRIPTION	QTY	PROJECT ALLOCATION	NON-REFUNDABLE FEE (Php)
1.	Supply and Delivery of 70 pieces Multi-Purpose Vehicle (Diesel) with Driver (Approved Specifications)	Lot	Php2,800,000.00	Php5,000.00
2.	Servicing of Senate Air-Conditioning Units (Window-type, Split-type and Package-type) (Approved Scope of Work)	Lot	Php600,000.00	Php5,000.00
3.	Supply of labor & materials for the proposed replacement of Aluminum Louver Glass (Fixed) Windows with Tempered Glass (Jalousie) at the Roofdeck of the Senate Building (Approved Scope of Work)	Lot	Php600,000.00	Php5,000.00
4.	Printing and Binding of "Journal of the Senate" (per approved specifications)	Lot	Php750,000.00	Php5,000.00
5.	CY2010 Subscription to Local Newspapers (Newspapers and Magazines)	Lot	Php600,000.00	Php5,000.00
6.	CY2010 Subscription to Local International Journals and Periodicals	Lot	Php156,000.00	Php5,000.00
7.	Supply of one (1) Audio Amplifier, equipment & supervision of audio broadcast program for Senate Building based on CY'08 10-year approved Request Book	Lot	Php2,500,000.00	Php5,000.00
8.	Supply of fabric, materials, equipment, manhours of various teams & other consultant items for the total quality control of facilities offices for CY2010 (per approved Scope of Work)	Lot	Php1,000,000.00	Php5,000.00
9.	Provision for technical services, labor, spare parts, tools & equipment in the maintenance and repair of Senate's audio-visual system for CY2010 (per approved Scope of Work)	Lot	Php800,000.00	Php5,000.00
10.	Supply of gasoline and diesel fuel for CY2010	Lot	Php4,000,000.00/Unit	Php4,000.00
11.	Supply of spare parts, fuel, lubricating oils and accessories for CY2010 (per approved Scope of Work)	Lot	Php800,000.00/Unit	Php5,000.00
12.	Subscription to Cable TV for CY2010 (per approved Scope of Work & specifications)	Lot	Php600,000.00/Unit	Php5,000.00
13.	Hauling and disposal of garbage using a compaction type garbage truck with at least 10 cubic capacity for CY2010	Lot	Php600,000.00/Unit	Php5,000.00
14.	Rental of one (1) unit mini-crane/boom for CY2010 (per approved Scope of Work and specifications)	Lot	Php2,000,000.00/Unit	Php5,000.00
15.	Container Consolidation and catering services for CY2010 (per approved Scope of Work)	Lot	(consumption basis)	Php5,000.00
16.	General supervision & provision of technical services, labor, tools, & equipment in the preventive maintenance of 2 (two) fire suppression systems for CY2010	Lot	Php2,500,000.00/Unit	Php5,000.00

The bidding documents shall be available to interested bidders subject to payment of the Non-Refundable Fee. (Sec. 65.1.4(f) Senate Rules of Procedure). Bids shall be submitted on or before 10:00 AM (10:00 NOON) of the 30th working day, counting SEPTEMBER 9, 2009 (last payment of non-refundable fee is to be made on this day). The schedule of pre-bidding conferences and submission and opening of bids is available at the BAC Secretariat Office.

All participants are required to submit their eligibility and evaluation documents which shall be processed by the Committee at 9 a.m. of the aforesaid bid opening date as the Committee shall start the evaluation of the bids. All bids must be within the Approved Budget of the Contract (ABC) and bids substantially in excess of it (currently LATE BIDS SHALL NOT BE ACCEPTED).

No Philippine Bidding Documents shall be issued after 2:00 PM.

The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality therein, or accept the bid most advantageous to the Government, and to declare failure of bidding when warranted by circumstances, all in accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA), and issued by the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB).

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO 1) REVIEW ALL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS; 2) REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS; 3) TERMINATE THE BID UPON AND/OR PURSUE APPROPRIATE LEGAL ACTION SHOULD A BIDDER BE FOUND TO HAVE VIOLATED RA 9184, its IRRs and its corresponding penalties; and/or 4) accept the bid most advantageous to the Government, any decision made by the Senate is final and executory.

FURTHER, THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ASSUMES NO OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER TO CONFERMANY OR INDEMNIFY THE BIDDER OR BIDDERS AGAINST AN THE CASE MAY BE, FOR ANY EXPENSE OR LOSS THAT SAID PARTY (IES) MAY INCUR IN ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE PRE-BIDDING AND BIDDING PROCESS NOTWITHSTANDING GUARANTEE THAT AN AWARD WILL BE MADE.

(Sgd.) ATTY. APPEL JOSE S. CAMINE
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

Factory prices decline by 3.9% in July, NSO says

Crude oil posts biggest drop

By Reena V.M. Domingo

FACTORY PRICES OF 26 SELECTED manufactured goods dropped by an average of 3.9 percent year on year in July according to the National Statistics Office.

Preliminary results from the NSO's monthly producer price survey showed that the producer price index (PPI) contracted annually due to the continued two-digit declines in the sub-sectors, the biggest of which was the petroleum products group at -51 percent.

Also showing steep drops in the period were basic metals (-14.3 percent), rubber and plastics products (12.6 percent), paper and paper products (11.6 percent) and furniture and fixtures (11.7 percent).

Five other sectors showed single-digit declines in prices, including electrical machinery, food, transport equipment, miscellaneous manufactures and tobacco products.

The report also showed that 10 sectors posted increasing prices, led by wood and wood products at 28.8 percent, footwear and tanning apparel at 13.9 percent, and textiles at 13.7 percent.

The seven other sectors that increased prices at single digits were chemical products, beverages, non-metallic mineral products, publishing and printing, non-electrical machinery, leather products, and fabricated metal products.

On a month-on-month basis, the PPI decreased by 0.4 percent due to July re-sight of the more affecting sectors reported price drops, which elevated one category posting the steepest at 3.8 percent.

There were no price drops observed in three major sectors, such as tobacco products, wood and wood products, and publishing and printing.

Nine sectors showed increasing prices, with those of furniture and fixtures posting the highest rate of 6 percent.

In an earlier report, the NSO said the value and volume of output of the manufacturing sector kept sliding at double-digit year-on-year in June at 12.6 percent and 18.6 percent, respectively due to declining production observed in 14 of 20 major industries.

The NSO's latest monthly integrated survey of selected industries showed that the month-on-month change remained positive, albeit slower at 1 percent in value and 2.3 percent in volume.

Both output value and volume have been contracting since October 2008, falling the deepest at 24.5 percent and 26.7 percent, respectively, in January.

GOINGS-ON

SM Group-POEA tie-up

THE SM GROUP LED BY BANCO DE ORO UNIBANK Inc. and SM Prime Holdings, and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration have launched the SM Balikbayan Center, giving overseas Filipino workers and their families easy access to various labor-related services.

The center is to open, located at the Atrium of SM Megamall, where pre-employment orientation seminars, first of licensed recruitment agencies, information on fraud and human trafficking, and privileges such as discounts and free overseas communication.

This year, the SM Group joined the mission to help OFWs by offering the services of SM malls and various services to be accessible even on weekends.

BDO earlier sealed a partnership with POEA for the holding of pre-deployment orientation seminars for Filipinos working abroad.

Good governance workshop

IN LINE WITH ITS CORPORATE MANTRA OF NATION-BUILDING and pro-active community stewardship, Ayala Land Inc. recently gazed the way for a one-and-a-half day workshop on Effective Leadership and Good Governance among local leaders of Barangay Carmona, Laguna, where much of Ayala Land Inc.'s 7,109-hectare flagship project for sustainable development, is located.

The workshop is one of a series of activities slated to be running months as part of Ayala's "Bayanihan" initiative, which considers under one program ALI's corporate social responsibility projects in the area.

It was organized with the help of Carmona Barangay Captain Eric Mendoza and Barangay Secretary Jocelyn Legaspino, and attended by several barangay kagawad and officials, as well as 21 other locals.

GDP seen to grow by up to 4% in '10

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY COULD grow by up to 4 percent next year, officials said on Tuesday, adding that the budget deficit is expected to fall within its target.

Neda-Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ralph Recto told reporters: "We expect the economy to grow by 3.6-3.6 percent next year.

"The global crisis is not over but the worst is over," he added.

Growth slowed to 4.6 percent last year and to 0.4 percent in the first three months of the year, forcing the government to cut its 2009 outlook to between 0.0-1.0 percent.

However, GDP in the third quarter to June was a better-than-expected 1.5 percent on the back of improving exports and massive stimulus spending.

Presidential spokesperson Cerge Remonde said President Macapagal-Arroyo had asked the country's economic managers to "adjust the (2010) GDP growth target to 4.0 percent" in the wake of the data.

Besides this and the budget deficit this year was likely to come in better than adjusted targets ceiling of P250 billion or 3.2 percent of GDP "because of the developments in the economy."

The review would cover GDP, budget deficit, inflation and exchange rate targets, he added. AFP

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Oakwood Premier opens in Ortigas

By Jerry E. Barros

OAKWOOD ASIA PACIFIC, A GLOBAL SERVICED-apartments provider, formally opened yesterday the Oakwood Premier Joy-Nostalg Center Manila with 237 fully furnished apartments for office and residential use.

"Manila is important to our international portfolio because of its expanding role in the global outsourcing," said Oakwood president and CEO Steve Sebo.

"The addition of this property further marks Oakwood's commitment to meeting the needs and demands of our global customers. We are honored to partner with Quantuple Properties Corp., owner of Oakwood Premier Joy-Nostalg Center Manila," Sebo added.

Quantuple, an emerging property developer, owns the building, while Oakwood manages the operations.

Units here begin at 45 square meters, with the biggest apartment at 282 sq. m. The ground floor and the 28th floor of the building's full-serviced apartments, while the 29th floor up to the penthouse are for lease to offices.

In a briefing, Oakwood general manager Brian B. Connolly said the residences were designed to provide a modern serviced living. It provides a total solution for short- or long-term living arrangements, he said.

"The modern lifestyle requires that we offer a multi-layered product that bestows one's 'home away from home' and 'office away from work' so that our clients can switch from their one environment to ours with minimal disruption," Connolly added.

RP rank in WB survey down to 144th

Poll focuses on ease of doing business

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE PHILIPPINES' RANKING IN THE World Bank's latest "Ease of Doing Business" survey fell by three notches to 144th, from last year's 141st, among 183 countries covered.

The survey aims to determine which countries offer the best and the worst environments for businesses.

The countries were ranked based on the ease or difficulty encountered by businesses in the following areas: Starting a business, dealing with construction permits, employing workers, registering a property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts and closing a business.

According to the World Bank, many countries experienced difficulties due to the global economic crisis. However, most of them instituted regulatory reforms to improve the business environment.

"The past year was a tough one for doing business. Firms around the world had to cope with the effects of a financial crisis that started in rich economies but led to a global economic downturn," the World Bank said in the survey released yesterday.

"Despite the challenges, more governments implemented regulatory reforms aimed at making it easier to do business than in any year since 2004, when Doing Business started to track reforms through its indicators," the World Bank said.

In the case of the Philippines, the bank said the country had implemented reforms aimed at giving businesses easier access to credit, easing the process of paying taxes and of closing down an insolvent firm.

A drop in a country's ranking does not necessarily mean the worsening of its business climate, it could also mean the improvements in its business environment was outpaced by those seen in other countries.

The survey showed Singapore had kept its No. 1 position in terms of ease of doing business. Others in the Top 10 were (in descending order): New Zealand, Hong Kong, the United States, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Ireland, Canada, Australia and Norway.

Countries in the bottom 10 were Central African Republic, Congo Dem. Rep., Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Congo-Rep., Chad, Venezuela RB, Burundi, Eritrea and Niger.

In the category of closing a business, the Philippines ranked the fifth in terms of having the most difficult environment. This category evaluates the ease or difficulty encountered by firms in shutting down, and the ability of creditors, tax collectors and other people connected getting their claims from an insolvent firm.

The survey showed that claimants only recover 4.4 percent of the liabilities owed by an insolvent firm.

In other categories, the Philippines' ranking were as follows: Ease in starting a business, 102nd; dealing with construction permits, 111th; employing workers, 115th; registering of property, 102nd; getting credit, 127th; protecting investors, 112nd; payment of taxes, 120th; trading across borders, 68th; and enforcing contracts, 116th.

PDIC clears ₱2.26B in Legacy claims

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE Corp. yesterday said it had already approved P2.26 billion worth of claims made by depositors of the close rural banks owned by the Legacy Group.

PDIC said the approved claims were through note-validation procedures.

PDIC president Jose Negrales said that while the deposit insurer aimed to settle claims of depositors as quickly as possible, it could not be careless in settling claims as it would be answerable to the Commission on Audit.

"PDIC had been meticulous in the first and second phases of the validation in accordance with the standard procedures in claims processing. This is in response to the post-audit notion that the Commission on Audit undertakes after payments are disbursed and acts in deputation through regular audit," PDIC said in the statement released to reporters yesterday.

Earlier estimates said PDIC would shoulder P14 billion worth of payments for deposit claims related to the 13 Legacy-owned rural banks which were shut down by the central bank late last year.

However, PDIC said that a review of its audittees so far showed that about P2.83 billion (representing 21,810 deposit accounts) of the P5.1 billion in claims lacked supporting documents and thus these could not be approved yet.

Another P4.76 billion in claims are still in the process of validation. P204 million have been denied and P2.35 billion were put on hold. The rest are still in line for PDIC's validation process.

Banks of the Legacy Group, owned by Celso de los Angeles, were closed down by the BSP for allegedly engaging in unsafe and unsound banking practices. The banks were said to be collecting deposits from the public by offering above-market interest rates. Officers of the banks and of the Legacy Group itself are suspected of stealing the deposits either to finance liquidity requirements in the pawnshop business or to finance their own gain. Mitch Arnaiz

Forex reserves hit record $41.3B

From page B1

2007 that maintaining healthy levels of foreign-exchange reserves was essential to ensure stability of the financial services.

The central bank official said it would be prudent for countries to have high reserves than rely solely on institutions like the International Monetary Fund for liquidity support in case of crisis.

"The IMF did not have a quick disbursing facility and so we [Asian countries] deemed it prudent to increase the reserves," Tabuguinda said.

Treasury yields rise ...

From page B1

basis points, while that for the 364-day debt paper went up by 3.7 basis points.

The six-month full new notes the government 4.194 percent, while the year-long bill rose 4.375 percent.

The P10-billion offer for the sixth-month bill was oversubscribed, with total tenders reaching P1.29 billion.

Likewise, tenders for the yearlong bill totalled P7.26 billion. Treasury officials accepted P0.3 billion worth of bids.

In an interview yesterday, Yap said the latest rates were "very much within" secondary market rates of 4 percent for the 91-day bills, 4.241 percent for the 182-day bills and 4.443 percent for the 364-day bills.

He added that P2.15 billion in government securities would be maturing this week.

In a related matter, the BSP has detected the P6.5-billion auction of 10-year treasury bonds set for next week, to give way for the price-setting switching for retail T-bonds.

Last week, Tan announced that the Treasury would sell at least P25 billion to retail T-bonds.

He said proceeds of this year's T-day would address the government's budget needs.

Energy firm to pour $1B ...

From page B1

moves in four prospective sites in Cotabato and Cagayan Valley and is looking at installing another one in Mercedes, Camarines Norte said.

Should these prospects turn out to be favorable, he said, it could take about six years before the facilities could be commissioned.

The 38 sites are located in Luzon and Visayas.

Yap added that the company would announce its wind farm projects and had no plans to explore other renewable energy sources such as hydro, biomass or geothermal.

"Wind is the most viable [renewable energy source] technology-wise," he said.

Based on studies conducted by the US National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the Department of Energy, the country has vast renewable energy potential, including 76,000 MW of wind capacity.

For this year alone, the company, through its subsidiary Trans-Asia Renewable Energy Corp., has allocated as low P40 million in operating expenses for its renewable energy projects.

Shares close higher

From page B1

The composite index rose 21.48 points to 2,052.40. The all-shares index added 0.68 percent, or 12.56 points, to close at 1,851.89.

A total of 2.9 billion shares worth P1.65 billion (P34.65 million) changed hands.

Gainers led losers 61 to 37, while 66 issues closed unchanged.

"Investors are apparently starting to price 2010 earnings," Alcantara Puig of AEB Sec. Eng Securities told Dow Jones Newswires.

"But I think it is still prudent to wait for prices to come down. And there are already off-cycle signs of an impending correction—third liners are already leading the market rise."

AFP

BUSINESS

Oil cartel set to hold crude supply steady

Opec meets in Vienna, likes current prices of $70 a barrel

VIENNA—OIL AT CLOSE TO $70 seems Opec will almost certainly keep existing output cuts in place when it meets in Vienna today, although it could seek to tighten compliance with existing targets, ministers and delegates said.

"The market is in very good shape, very well supplied, the price is good for everybody (consumers and producers)," Kuwait Oil Minister Ali al Kuraie told oil world in Vienna in the early hours of Sunday.

When asked if he thought Opec needed to cut output at its meeting late on Wednesday, Nobel said: "With the price ranging between $66 and $73, what else do you want? The price, everybody likes, consumers and producers."

Oil rose beyond $69 a barrel on Tuesday.

Opec has kept official output targets steady since it announced last fall (on a record) cut of 4.2 million barrels per day from September 2008 production.

But as the oil market has recovered from a low of $32.40/bl (November—by modern history) few years—to this year's peak of $75 (in August, it has raised levels of compliance with the agreed cuts from a peak of around 80 percent of agreed cuts to less than 70 percent.

The lapsing discipline has contributed to an investors build that has taken stocks to the equivalent of nearly 62 days of forward cover, according to the International Energy Agency—around 10 days more than Opec views as comfortable.

"It must now will be compliance. It will be discussed and stressed by many countries with the hope others will comply," a Gulf delegate said.

"The most likely outcome is that they will keep the ceiling and quota unchanged," he said further. "It's going to be a smooth and easy meeting."

For some in Opec, high stocks are a greater issue than they are for others, although all members have been pleased by the strength of the oil market's rally in defiance of budging recessions.

The price has been buoyed by a wave of confidence across markets, which have begun investing in economic recovery,—which implies higher fuel demand.

Reuters

Switzerland best economy, WEF reports

GENEVA—SWITZERLAND KNOCKS THE United States off the position as the world's most competitive economy as the result of the $13 banking system fell it more exposed to contracting spending worldwide, a report said on Tuesday.

The World Economic Forum's global competitiveness report 2009-2010 showed economies with a large focus on financial services such as the United States, Britain or Iceland were the losers of the crisis.

The United states as the world's biggest economy lost last year's strong lead, slipping to No. 2 for the first time since the introduction of the index in its current form in 2004.

"We have been expecting for some time that it may lose its top position. There are a number of imbalances that have been building up," said Jennifer Blanke, head of the WEF's Global Competitiveness Network.

"There are problems on the financial market that we were not aware of before. Three countries (like the US and Britain) are getting penalized now," she said.

Hard to Swiss banks also declined. But in the overall ranking of banks' soundness, the Alpine country still ranked 44th, US banks fell to 106—right behind Tanzania—and British banks to 126 in the ranking, now topped by Canada's banks.

The WEF based its assessment on a range of factors, key for any country to prosper. The index includes economic data such as growth but also health data or the capacity of Internet users.

Reuters

PEOPLE look at a model of a Boeing 747 on display at Asian Aerospace 2009 in Hong Kong. China's largest home-produced commercial jet made its international debut at Asia's biggest air show, in a demonstration of the country's ambition to be a global aviation giant. AFP

Hershey considering rival Cadbury bid

NEW YORK—US CHOCOLATE maker Hershey could jump into a takeover battle with a bid for Cadbury after the British confectioner opposed an offer from food giant Kraft Foods, the Wall Street Journal said Tuesday.

The Pennsylvania-based company is "likely to make some response" to Kraft's Monday bid, the financial daily said, citing a source close to the matter.

Hershey's potential bid rose from conversations "that Cadbury is the last major confectionery company potentially available," said the person familiar with the situation.

In comparison to Kraft, Hershey's position in the market is diminutive—an annual turnover of some $5 billion a right times smaller than the food giant.

However, the Journal noted, Hershey and Cadbury have a long working relationship, having talked about combination in the past. The firm also distributes the iconic British confectioner's products in the United States.

On Monday, Kraft Foods's $16.7 billion (11.5 billion pound) bid was spurned by Cadbury, though Kraft said it hoped the British group would eventually jump on board.

Cadbury's share price however surged on the news and ended the day with a gain of 37.19 pence at 703 pence.

In January 2007, top Hershey and Cadbury officers sat down to consider forming a "global confectionery powerhouse," though the financial strife and nothing came of the discussions. AFP

Asian stocks up on stimulus

BANGKOK—ASIAN MARKETS ROSE YESterday as investors bet on a pledge by the world's 20 biggest economies to underwrite the global recovery with massive stimulus efforts.

Stocks in Australia jumped more than 4 percent amid news business confidence had reached a new six-year high. Japanese shares shrugged off weak economic data to gain modestly. Oil prices hung around $68, ahead of Wednesday's Opec meeting.

With Wall Street closed for a holiday, markets continued to top up the weekend announcement from finance officials at the Group of 20 summit in London that boosted Europe and Asian shares on Monday.

The officials welcomed improvements in economic growth but warned recovery was not sustainable without continued government help in the form of deficit spending, low interest rates and efforts to expand the money supply.

Japan's Nikkei 225 stock average was up 25.32 points, or 0.3 percent, at 10,346.40 despite a steep fall in the nation's current account surplus underlining prolonged weakness in exports—a key driver of growth for the world's No. 2 economy.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 128.89, or 0.6 percent, to 20,788.20 while South Korea's Kospi rose up 0.8 percent at 1,014.27.

Australia's benchmark jumped 1.5 percent as a monthly survey showed business confidence in August at its highest level in nearly six years. China's Shanghai index gained 0.2 percent and Taiwan rose 1.4 percent.

In Tokyo trade, the world's biggest automaker Toyota Motor Corp. fell 3 percent despite news saying it is feeling little country's weakness in Japan to keep up with brisk sales of its Prius gas-electric hybrid car. AP

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Editor Cesar D. Mangaoang

Southeast Asia's 'miracle market' gets edgier rides

THE SOUL'S design is a marriage of ideas between Hollywood-ish California and techno-hipping-crazy Korea.

SOUTHEAST ASIA MODIFIED Defender 90, RP Team's competition vehicle

By Tess R. Salazar

THEY SAY MISERY loves company. But the Philippine auto industry seems to have made a U-turn for the better. Nowadays, the industry is murmuring a new mantra: Prosperity loves edgy rides.

Among Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines has shown that it is the least affected in terms of car sales—boasting a new lineup of 12.4 percent growth for the first seven months of the year compared to a dismal corresponding 20 to -30 percent growth for most of its neighbors. And so, the attention the local auto market has been receiving from car manufacturers and fan fare isn't without cause.

And if you are market is running buzzwords such as the "miracle market," or "SUV country" and SEA...does you know the country is on the map of auto multinationals. It's enough for some to take a big risk on you and make the country a gauge for the entire region.

Take, for example, Kia Motors and its move to make the Philippine market a testing ground of sorts for its new urban crossover Soul. The Soul was formally launched in the Philippines on Aug. 20 by Kia Motors' exclusive distributor in the Philippines, Columbian Auto Corp. Inc., officially making the Philippines the first country in the Asia Pacific region to have a Soul from Seoul, and 10 months after making its worldwide debut at the Paris Motor Show in October 2008.

Kia's decision to "hunt" by Soul first in the Philippines certainly surprised neighboring SEA countries, admitted Felix J. Stalling Jr., CAC president and chief operating officer. But when the year-to-date comparative sales figures for the SUV and compact SUV market come in, the Philippines was the most logical choice.

At its launch at the Mega Trio in Pasig City, the crowd soon realized why Kia's urban crossover was named Soul. Inside from the ribcage dust that it exuded the outer as the capital of its origin "Seoul"). It was a vehicle the young local that young-at-heart would easily identify with. Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers Philippines Inc. (Camap) president Elizabeth Lee, who was present during the launch, de-

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TOYOTA moving forward

Automakers on uphill road to build brand in China

SHANGHAI, HONG Kong—After driving his BMW 5 series model for just three years, Chinese fashion trader Gary Liu traded in his car for an Audi A6.

His decision had less to do with performance and more with image—BMW's have become associated with China's nouveau riche, while Audis are favored by "old money" and senior government officials.

"When people made money the first thing they did was get a BMW," says Liu, who lives in Shenzhen, a city known for its rich entrepreneurial culture. "I had a lot of fun driving my BMW. Now, I want to try something different."

China's car market is the world's largest with growth unpredictable that are dazzling. About 13 million vehicles will be bought in China this year, a 500 percent increase from 2000.

Yet despite the opportunities, foreign automakers face an uphill battle marketing cars in an intensely competitive and fickle market.

"The huge amount of foreign brands pouring into the Chinese market somehow overloads potential consumers with far too much information," said Joshua Geller, vice president of marketing for BMW China.

"So it is getting more and more difficult to get brand and product information through to end consumers in the audience."

BMW tries to separate itself from the rest of the luxury car pack with "experiential marketing," hosting events such as a car rally across China called Destination 5 which has involved 25,000 applicants in only a few places within just a year.

Despite the novelty of such campaigns as well as viral marketing initiatives such as a social networking website for BMW owners, industry experts say Chinese consumers have little brand loyalty.

"Non-foreign automakers have successfully differentiated their brands in China to the broadest pricing, more than anything else, it will be the No. one concern for most buyers," said Hsiang Zhural, an analyst with GM Middleside, a global industry consultancy.

"Customer loyalty is almost an unheard of concept here and even a moderate price cut can easily swing customers away to the competing brands," Hsiang added.

In China's luxury sector, which makes up about 5 percent of car sales, rival and BMW owners are starting to switch brands without a second thought.

"We have an Audi at home. I am here to pick a BMW as a birthday gift," said a woman, who gave her name only as Wu, as she inspected a BMW 7 model at a Shanghai dealership.

Over the hill

While names such as Toyota, Volkswagen and Honda Motor have well-defined images in the West, brand Paris Hilton is up to challenging due to huge demographic differences in a country where many people rode bicycles as their primary mode of transport just a decade ago.

In some cases, circumstance plays a crucial role in creating brand equity. Take General Motors' Buick, a car seen as over the hill back home where sales have been dropping.

Yet in China the Buick enjoys enormous success with a positive brand image that dates back to the early 20th century when aristocratic figures such as Pu Yi, the last emperor of China, and Zhou Enlai, communist China's first premier, owned, drove or were driven in Buicks, GM says.

In fact, the Buick is enjoying double digit growth in China where sales have already topped 2 million. Other popular cars are VW's Passat, Honda's Accord and Toyota's Camry and Corolla.

Tailoring its models to the tastes of Chinese consumers, GM sells Cadillacs and other sedans with roomy back seats as many well-heeled Chinese prefer to be chauffeured through traffic-choked roads in China's megacities.

Even Porsche launched a sales-friendly stunt last year when it began selling stores for company executives traveling in the back seat.

Between auto-show stunts the companies can't rest among the well-heeled because the consumers to work in China's traffic-clogged roads can be long, tiresome affairs. And drivers are cheap, earning just a few hundred dollars a month.

Bland brands

Glowing prediction for car sales in China this year due to the financial downturn were swept away by a multibillion-dollar government stimulus plan that included tax breaks and sales tax cuts on some car models, fueling a demand spurt at a time when many factories had slowed down production.

Demand for new cars jumped so high, so quickly that some customers have had to wait weeks for deliveries of new vehicles due to manufacturing logjams.

Industry analysts predict double-digit sales growth in the coming years as more first-time car buyers enter the market and China's wealthy and upper middle class become bored.

Many of the cars that will end up on Chinese roads will come from the factories of domestic brands such as Geely, Chery and Brilliance China Automotive Holdings.

The local brands are significantly cheaper but so is their quality. Car prices encourage from $6,000 to $12,000. But foreign cars from the BMW 3 and 5 series and Audi A4 and A6. Meanwhile, the cheapest local brands such as Chery's QQ can go for as little as 30,000 yuan ($4,400) or less.

Cars in the luxury category include BMW, Audi, Toyota's Lexus, Honda's Acura, Nissan Motor's Infiniti and Lincoln Motor's Cadillac which offers a model that introduce about 10 cars longer in the back for the local market.

In doing contrast to its sporty and sophisticated reputation in much of the world, BMW's China image in China owes much to the company's entry to the market in the mid-1990s when the first generation of newly wealthy to move into top brands.

A GM advertisement is displayed on a building in downtown Shanghai. China's car market is the world's largest with growth opportunities that are dazzling. About 13 million vehicles will be bought in China this year, a 500 percent increase from 2000.

PICKUP: A new offering in the window of a BMW car dealership in downtown Shanghai. Despite the opportunities, foreign automakers face an uphill battle marketing cars in an intensely competitive and fickle market.

Southeast Asia's 'miracle market' gets edgier rides

PHILIPPINE team composed of (from left) Mars Soong, Martin Rosas, Sergio Jamille, Larry Mendiola, Dennis Javier, Wellington Soong and Bobby Consunji.

A MAJOR challenge for the wild, wild East. The Wildcats is for the rough parts. The Ranger is priced at P1.131 million for the automatic transmission and P1.080 million for the manual.

Bobby Consunji, consultant coordinator for Team Land Rover Philippines, said the Rubicon Challenge is the most demanding 4x4 race in the world.

There's more to mowing than mere, looks and attitude. There's fitness, too.

Choosing to focus more on the "greener" side of motoring, Honda's series of fuel-economy driven contests are rule off just past with the motoring media but also with a group of car enthusiasts keeping more of their fuel gauges for performance than for fun guilty: the Honda Club of the Philippines.

In its most recent fuel-economy run, motoring journalists were partnered with Honda Club representatives, yielding mixed results.

"Where motoring journalists rapidly deplete, we must therefore relieve fuel wastage and make every drop count. And so, through today's fuel economy competition, we call everyone to drive every drop," said Salvador Gonzalez, Honda Cars Philippines' department head of vehicle sales and corporate communications.

Parade of the 'luxuries'

Good times are certainly in. How else would you explain the influx of new luxury cars this second half of 2009?

Not long ago, Lexus Manila Inc. introduced its jaw-dropping IS 300C (featured in Inquirer Motoring Aug. 24), GM's Hummer Inc., general distributor of the Mercedes-Benz, Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge brands, "quietly" introduced its CLC-Class Sports Coupé (an early denies) in mid-July.

Asian Carmakers Corp., the exclusive distributor of BMW vehicles and motorcycles in the country, wasn't going to be left behind as it introduced its flagship model, the BMW 7 Series. The new BMW 7 is initially available in two engine variants: the 750Li and the 740Li.

A few months ago, Viking Cars forthwand up the luxury auto market with the unveiling of its sports crossover Volvo XC60 (the smaller sibling of the XC90). What's edgy about it, you ask? Its City Safety feature lowers the risk of another Volvo 30 high fly maneuvering its own speed and distance in relation to other vehicles in front.

With all these latest rumbling around, we can almost believe this country is right up there with the G20, in terms of motion.

Task force has been reactivated, DoE claims

Conclusion

APPARENTLY STUNG BY CONSUMER and Oil Price Watch head Raul Concepcion's statement that the Department of Energy and Antitrust Task Force has traded for the last 11 years on mere oil inventories and costs of the oil firms as mandated by the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act of 1998, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes announced that the DoE under his watch has reactivated and restructured the Task Force with increased membership.

In a press statement, Reyes asserted that the joint-task force has seen set up various complaints desks in key provinces in Mindanao, Cotabato City, Davao City, Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga City. Reyes added that the joint-task force has been set up to "investigate complaints of violations of the Anti-Cartel provisions of the Philippine Competition Act (Republic Act 9329) and other oil companies to submit required reports to the DoE," this does not mean that the DoE has to divulge such information to the public. "In fact, Chapter IV, Section 13 of the same law provides that all business information will be maintained in confidence and will be used only for official law enforcement purposes..."

Relief

Still that to the Social Justice Society (SJS), an advocacy group that filed early this year a petition for the declaratory relief to have the Consolidated Audit (COA), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and Bureau of Customs (BOC) open and examine the books of accounts of Petron, Pilipinas Shell and Chevron. The SJS stated the issue of whether the oil companies are committing anticompetitive and predatory pricing practices under Section 31 of the oil deregulation law and consequently and contributed to certain of trade prohibited under Article 186 of the Revised Penal Code.

The Big 3 separately filed their pleadings to dismiss the SJS petition on the grounds, among others, that it was premature as it had not been formally referred to the DoE-DOF Task Force. Last April, Manila Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 20 Presiding Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. issued an order dismissing the COA, BIR and BOC as a party to the petition.

SDV-UMAP

To refresh the Big 3 filed a motion for reconsideration, arguing that the audited examination is not mandated by Rule 27 of the Rules of Court or by the oil deregulation law and that it is beyond the jurisdiction or authority of the COA, BIR and BOC. Further, that their books of accounts and other financial records had already been examined by Sycip, Gorres & Velayo-University of Asia and the Pacific (SGV-UMAP) which, in a report to the DoE in June 2008, concluded that oil prices did not seem to have been unreasonably high for the period from January 2005 to January 2008.

The Big 3's motion for reconsideration was supported by the Office of the Solicitor General which declared that the three government agencies have no mandate to undertake the task of reviewing the oil firms' books of accounts.

Dismissed

However, Pampilo dismissed their motion for lack of merit, stating that there is no law or jurisprudence that prohibits government entities such as the COA, BIR and BOC from performing acts that would serve the public. "The intent of relying on the services of the [state] auditors, then it is the duty of the state to act as guardian and to give [public protection to its citizens," the RTC judge said.

Pampilo added that although the SGV-UMAP study to assess the reasonableness of oil prices was commissioned by the DoE, the court cannot take judicial notice of the report because it was not submitted before the court. Consumers would also note that the study does not cover the crucial months before the price of Dubai crude plunged almost 60 percent from July 2008 to January-February 2009.

The SJS has also filed an administrative case versus Reyes before the Office of the Ombudsman for corruption suppression due to neglect of duty. As its complaint, the SJS and Reyes failed to "submit any credible proof that the country's inventory and thus violated the oil deregulation law which requires the DoE to maintain a periodic schedule of present and future total industry inventory of petroleum products for determining the level of supply and to publish this matter on at least a public newspaper." Making the petition complete is necessary, the SJS maintained, "to help ensure fair and equitable position by the players in the downstream oil industry and to facilitate the attainment of a truly competitive petroleum product market."

Meanwhile, the bad word—meaning pricing—is bound to hasten more. But DoE's conflict may complicate.

ON THE ROAD

Aida Arcilla-Mendoza

Bosch helps motorists achieve more mileage with less fuel

TODAY, A GROWING NUMBER OF motorists are increasingly aware of the need to save fuel. Cost-saving measures are very crucial in the current economic situation and with the continuously mounting fuel prices. It is therefore essential for Filipino drivers to be knowledgeable on saving on costs, especially on non-utilities like mobility, and in this case, on how to save on fuel consumption.

Right here, fuel efficiency is the operative word. And Bosch believes that investing in quality car parts will not only increase fuel efficiency, they also last longer. Ultimately, quality is cheaper in the long run.

Besides these tips and suggestions on driving style and information on technology that can help save money, including regular vehicle maintenance and using quality spare parts, which can significantly reduce fuel consumption.

So the next time you leave your car in your valet or the mall, do remind him to shut off the engine when the vehicle is parked. After all, you would not want your fuel bill to mess in her or your shopping bill.

Reducing fuel consumption

There are 12 ways on how to reduce fuel consumption and save money on every journey:

1 **Conduct regular diagnostic tests on your vehicles.** Engine errors can be identified and corrected. If functional errors are left unchecked, these can lead to increased fuel consumption due to faulty engine calibration.

2 **Make sure that the oxygen sensor is being checked or replaced.** A worn out oxygen sensor results in increased fuel consumption, poor engine performance and increased exhaust emissions.

3 **Check the air pressure in your vehicle's tires and its chassis setup.** Low tire pressure leads to increased friction while a misaligned chassis setup will result in unstable movements of the vehicle. These can lead to higher fuel consumption.

4 **Replace air filter regularly.** A blocked air filter leads to lower air flow rate, thus reducing power. This will then prompt the driver to compensate by increasing the pressure on the accelerator pedal and consume more fuel.

5 **Conduct regular maintenance of the ignition system.** Any worn-out spark plug or incorrect ignition timing will also lead to poorer burn of fuel mixture.

6 **Properly maintain your vehicle's braking system.** Regularly changing brake fluid will also help maintain the functionality of the braking system, ensuring its working life and safety.

7 **Properly maintain your vehicle's fuel system.** A dirty fuel filter or injector limits fuel supply. This will then result in lower power output and higher fuel consumption.

8 **Remove unnecessary weight from your vehicle.** As the principle goes, accelerating with extra weight uses more energy while decelerating with extra weight increases brake wear.

9 **Drive more efficiently.** Aggressive driving (hard accelerating, braking sharply, etc.) results in higher fuel consumption. Gradually driving is also safer for both driver and pedestrians, thus, saving more than just gas money.

10 **Reduce electricity consumption.** When more vehicle electronics are turned on, more fuel is required to power them. Air-con units draw revenue that are really needed. Also pay attention to the air-conditioning system as it uses a lot of energy.

Quality = lower car performance

11 **The use of original Bosch parts can help reduce fuel consumption.** Bosch products are backed up by years of experience, coupled with innovative research and meticulous production. Poor quality parts, while cheaper at the point of sale, may lead to subsequent consumption problems including faulty starts and even more expensive engine damage due to their questionable reliability.

Additionally, poor quality reproduction parts usually create performance problems in the application class are fit 100 percent to the set and significantly result to high fuel consumption. Buying original and high-quality automotive products can help ensure optimized performance in your vehicles.

12 **Make sure your vehicle is running properly and on optimum conditions by having it vehicle tuned up on a regular, recommended interval.** Bosch Service workshops are located in key cities nationwide, offering to ensure accurate diagnostic service for vehicles and provide the right quality parts for every car. These workshops maintain the same global standards that sets one find in over 14,000 Bosch Service centers worldwide.

THESE GEN Prius

Worldwide sales of TMC hybrids top 2M units

TOKYO—TOYOTA MOTOR CORP. recently announced that global cumulative sales of its hybrid vehicles have topped the 2-million mark, with more than 2.01 million units sold worldwide as of Aug. 31.

In 1997 in Japan, TMC launched the "Coaster Hybrid EV" in August and launched the "Prius" in December. The latter mass-produced hybrid vehicle—in Europe, Asia and elsewhere in 2000. Next came the second-generation Prius in 2003 and the expanded use of TMC's hybrid system to such vehicles as minivans, SUVs and rear-wheel-drive sedans. On May 31, 2007, the global cumulative sales of TMC's hybrid vehicles topped 1 million.

Continued to expand

This year, TMC continued to expand its hybrid vehicle lineup, launching the Lexus "RX450h" in April, the third-generation Prius in May and the Lexus "HS250h"—the first dedicated Lexus hybrid model—in July. All these vehicles have been well received and are expected to contribute to the popularization of hybrid vehicles.

TMC currently sells 13 hybrid vehicle models in approximately 90 countries and regions around the world, including three commercial vehicle models in Japan. It is expanding its engineering ties Toyota even further and increasing the number of countries and regions in which it sells hybrid vehicles.

Management priority

As of Aug. 31, 2009, TMC calculates that TMC hybrid vehicles, since 1997, have led to approximately 11 million fewer tons of CO_2 emissions—considered to be a cause of global warming—than would have been realized by gasoline-powered vehicles of similar size and driving performance.

Bolstering response to environmental issues is a management priority. TMC has endeavored to advance the widespread use of hybrid vehicles. TMC's stance is to further promote the use of hybrid vehicles, through such measures as aiming to sell 1 million hybrid vehicles a year as early as possible in the 2010s, and introducing hybrid models in all vehicle series in its lineup as early as possible in the 2020s.

Mitsubishi achieves highest ranking in RP sales satisfaction study

Overall industry satisfaction in the Philippines declines as shoppers have higher expectations

SINGAPORE—MITSUBISHI IMPROVES by two unit positions from 2008 to rank highest in overall new vehicle sales satisfaction in the Philippines, according to the 2H Power Info Pacific 2009 Philippines Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) Study.

Now in its ninth year, the study measures new-vehicle owner satisfaction with sales and delivery experiences and examines areas key factors that contribute to overall satisfaction. In order of importance, these factors are delivery process, dealership facilities, salesperson, paperwork, deal, sales initiation and dealership facility.

Mitsubishi ranks highest with a score of 841 on a 1,000-point scale, outperforming particularly well in the delivery process factor. Honda and Mazda, respectively, follow in the rankings, with both brands improving from 2008. Other brands performing above the industry average are Chevrolet, Ford and Toyota.

Overall industry satisfaction in 2009 averages 833, a 39-point decline from 2008. The factors with the largest declines from 2008 are delivery process (down 53 points) and dealership facility (down 52 points).

The study finds that despite an overall reduction in delivery ratings there is an average of 4 days from 4.9 days in 2008—customers have higher expectations regarding delivery timing in 2009, compared with 2008.

On average, customers who say delivery timing is "about as expected" receive their vehicles in 3.9 days, compared with 5.4 days in 2008. Similarly, customers who receive their vehicles in 12.9 days rate their experience is "worse than expected." This measure was considerably longer in 2008—an average of 11.7 days.

With largest declines

Overall vehicle sales in the Philippines have declined by approximately 3,000 units between August 2008 and February 2009, compared with the same period the year before," said Eric Hosoi, general manager for the Philippines at J.D. Power Asia Pacific, Singapore. "With the reduction in demand, manufacturers are in a better position to improve their delivery timing. However, that positive outcome is unexplained as buyers tend to set even higher standards during an economic downturn. Buyers have more bargaining power in a seven-year market like this, particularly in the automotive sector."

Shift in customer satisfaction

The study also finds a shift in customer satisfaction among models—in second place is Honda Jazz, followed by Mazda 3. Among those owners of customer satisfaction averages 30 points below the industry average. In 2008, customers among these customers was nearly equal to the industry average. Additionally, the percent of model-mismatched customers rises dramatically—approximately half of model-mismatched customers switch the same. In addition to more visits to the dealerships, model-mismatched customers are also more likely to take up loans, as well as receive discounts.

"Manufacturers should pay more attention to the model-mismatched group of shoppers, which currently comprise nearly 30 percent of customers," Hosoi said. "Manufacturers raised customer loyalty in second quarter rather than their competitors and optimally tend to compare their experience with the existing than having to attract new customers in the market."

Strong impact

The study also finds that customer satisfaction with the overall purchase experience has a strong impact on dealer loyalty. Approximately 50 percent of "delighted" owners say they are "definitely" repurchasing a rating of 10 on a 10-point scale; say they "definitely would" have their vehicle serviced at the purchase dealer, compared with just 38 percent among "dissatisfied" customers (those providing a rating of 5 or less).

The 2009 Philippine SSI Study is based on the responses of more than 1,400 new-vehicle owners who purchased their vehicles between August 2008 and February 2009. It was fielded between February and April 2009. The SSI study is one of five consumer-based studies conducted annually in the Philippines by J.D. Power Asia Pacific. The 2009 Philippines Customer Service Index (CSI) Study, which measures new-vehicle owner satisfaction with after sales dealership service, was released in June.

MOTORING

Isuzu, Toyota commited to reforestation efforts

IPC's Bolmadrid (left) joins Yokoda in leading the reforestation efforts in Lake Calibato.

Text and photos by Charles E. Bolton

WITH OVER 700 million vehicles being driven worldwide, the fumes they emit into the air are regarded by many as responsible for accelerating the buildup of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Together with our increasing need to drive a vehicle, our need to burn or cut trees is another reason hundreds of millions of tons of heat-trapping carbon dioxide are released into the atmosphere each year.

While most of us would like to think we aren't part of the problem, the fact remains that every time we drive, we burn gasoline or diesel fuel that releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

The same could be said whenever we buy timber products, use tissue paper or disposable diapers...we're allowing trees to be cut.

Ease up the situation

But like most enlightened citizens of this planet, we think up new ways to ease up the situation (and without resorting to ditching our cars or doing away with wood).

We choose our vehicles more wisely, we learn how to drive more efficiently as well as we now look for suitable alternatives as we won't have to make unnecessary turns.

Realizing they have the capability to lead if not influence others, automakers in recent years have begun supporting a number programs geared toward helping the planet heal itself.

"As we seek greener outlooks to success aimed geared" activities, we also look for other ways on how our company could contribute in saving our planet," said Reiji Takeda, president of Isuzu Philippine Corp.

Takeda related that since 2003, IPC has been sponsoring environment-related projects as a way to celebrate its anniversary.

THIS year IPC teams up with Haribon Foundation in planting thousands of young trees along the shores of Lake Calibato.

"We have supported the Save the La Mesa Watershed project that seeks to maintain an 11-hectare forest, planted mangroves in a five-hectare area in Pangasinan and donated 10,000 Gmelin Flagellings to Laguna Lake, to mention a few," he related.

For this year, IPC reached their 15th year by teaming up with Haribon Foundation in their reforestation project.

"IPC donated 3,000 young trees and several environmental markers along the shores of Lake Calibato in Cavite, Laguna as well as in Tabunan watershed in Cebu and to the mountains of Ilocos-Ilocos and Davao in Sarigao del Sur," informed IPC AVP Arthur Bolmadrid during the Luzon leg of the tree-planting event held last week.

Bolmadrid added that planting trees is hugely beneficial to the world in the face of accelerating climate change: "Without these reforestation efforts, there will be fewer trees that could absorb carbon gases that contribute to global warming."

Not alone

Of course, IPC is not alone in its efforts to preserve our planet.

In 2007, Toyota Motor Corp. has delivered the Prius, the world's first mass-produced hybrid vehicle. Now on its third generation, the Prius still remains the benchmark for hybrid cars globally as it is able to produce over 70 percent fewer smog-forming emissions than the average new vehicle.

But TMC intended to actively pursue sustainability not only in the field of R&D and manufacturing, but also social contributions.

So aside from pioneering Toyota marketing, the world's biggest automaker in September 2007 decided to team up with its local counterparts here, Toyota Motor Philippines, in reforesting some 1,772 hectares of denuded forest lands within the Pefiblanca Protected Landscape and Ecozone in the provinces of Cagayan.

Pefiblanca is an area that has been under pressure by illegal logging and wildlife hunting for years and the reforestation would safeguard a critical watershed that threatens the country's most important rice-growing area.

Under this three-year project that ends August 2010, TMC is projecting to raise P34 million (P10 million) not only to plant trees but also provide alternative livelihood for local communities through agroforestry.

Establish a forest

Specifically, Toyota and its partners will establish a forest for the harvesting of firewood and encourage residents to cultivate alternative cash crops, such as mango, rambutan and cacao to combat logging for firewood and slash-and-burn agricultural methods which cause deforestation in the area.

Aside from Toyota Group, the Philippine Pefiblanca Sustainable Reforestation Project, is also supported by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Pefiblanca local government and local communities, and Conservation International, an environmental NGO.

The reforestation project in Pefiblanca is part of TMC's continuing efforts at improving the environment worldwide after TMC successfully reforested over 2,300 hectares of land in Chiba's Hebei Province.

Caring for the environment is a priority for TMP which could be observed when visiting the Toyota Special Economic Zone in Santa Rosa City, Laguna.

Within this 61-hectare property, TMP boasts of a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant, which has the capacity to treat 800 cubic meters of industrial and sanitary wastewater per day.

There is also a 11.6-hectare forest that surrounds the TMP plant at the TSEZ.

The "Toyota Forest" is abounding with trees and secondary growth and is home to many species of birds. It has its own tree nursery where TMP rescues seedlings that it donates regularly to local government institutions and other private organizations.

To further promote its ecological advocacy, the company has readied the "Toyota Forest" to accommodate public tours.

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What's new with Movement 8?

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

For Sept. 14 event, the Filipino design group–now a global name–is preparing an integrated design experience

MOVEMENT 8, THE world renowned group of Filipino designers that transforms native materials into cutting-edge artworks, turns 10 this year.

Since their launch at the Valencia Furniture Fair in 1999, the designers have been enjoying world acclaim for their innovations. Their works are seen in top international publications and fabulous homes, and have won international awards, among them the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York City.

It's been a few years since the members of Movement 8 had a collective project, after the death of its founder, Ilwa Cinco (creative director Joseph "Eli" Pierre-Antoine).

On Sept. 14, Movement 8 mounts an interpreti design show at the Serendra Sales Pavilion at Bonifacio Global City. The event is produced by Success Lifestyle, Cocoon/home magazine with Ayala Premier, Alveo, Serendra 1 and 2, Ammang, SEDC. Chef Gilbert Fregillana of Kai Restaurant and Nobu have re-designing the food to be served at the international opening on Sept. 14. Also supporting the event is Wine Depot.

What Movement 8 members will design this time, and how they will design the space of the Sales Pavilion will be something to look forward to.

After the Sept. 14 opening, the exhibit will be open to the public for two weeks, particularly to design, architecture and arts schools.

Movement 8 members are Budji Layug, Kenneth Cobonpue, Yo Florda, Willie Petrel, Ann Pamintuan, Tony Gonzales and Lutha Robinson.

What's new with Movement 8?

To page C3

BUDI Layug has evolved into a space planner. The room shows the tropical modern style which he pioneered. His furniture pieces, made from wood and bamboo, are enlivened with elegance and sophistication.

Budji Layug: From designing bamboo to designing space

In the '70s, bamboo was considered "poor man's wood" in the Philippines. Artemio "Budji" Layug broke barriers when he designed a bamboo furniture collection that evoked tropical chic. His fascination there with the sapa-lun and the possibilities of enhancing its design elements inspired him to produce his landmark Great Bamboo Collection.

He became the first Filipino to display his collection in furniture department stores such as Bloomingdale's, Lord & Taylor and Harrod's, and to establish export lines in the US.

His designs are in such luxury resorts as Peter Antonios, Shangri-la and Hyatt Hotels. His furniture fashion feature the various rooms, nooks and textures of bare, bamboo-lined interiors of, in chairs, undressed, elegant lines.

Layug's style has continuously moved with sophisticated, tropical looks—dark furniture made from natural materials combined with luxurious upholstery, or semi-soft, supported interiors. Aside from pioneering the more tropical furniture, he also introduced the concept of bringing outdoor bamboo and rattan furniture inside the house.

Aside from pioneering using renewable materials such as bamboo and rattan, Layug was also the first to incorporate leather binding and weaving with indigenous materials and incorporate cane wood and shell.

In time, Layug was looking not only at furniture or design elements, he was also designing space. Space planning became a natural extension of his design.

Collaborating with architect Royal Parreño, Layug has been designing complete residences and offices and planning how furniture and other elements relate to the space. Subsequently, his furniture has become more graceful and slender as they have been scaled down for residential living.

Not known to many but a few friends, Layug, a Fine Arts student before he explored the world, has been painting abstract expressionism.

He, his inspiration, Layug says he's moving towards symbolism of furniture and space and how the surrounding architecture blends with local design.

Luisa Robinson: Using organic materials with calculated precision

LUISA Robinson's Dragon Tail lighting uses paper and origami techniques to create astounding shapes.

Designer Luisa de los Santos Robinson molds her mark producing trays, boxes and vases made of bamboo, fiber, fabric, leather and local materials. Her accessories are characterized by organic shapes incorporated with an inviting texture.

Top B-Tall vases is amorphic shapes and made of unusual materials such as cinderella ash or vegetable wicks of art.

"You wouldn't think of pairing flowers in there as you would see a vase. Even if you don't put flowers, they can stand by themselves," she says.

Although her faces are contemporary, she uses elements that make them look exotic. Her boxes have multi-purpose potential in rosewood and wild sour cassava, her housework.

The furniture can be as classy as designer, or with an antique looking position. Her designs are marked by lightness and classics.

"The materials I put in total sophistication," she says. Among her striking pieces are a carved bookrack with cowhide, and a table with clean elephant ankle bands from exotic rattle stainless steel rings.

Robinson also uses Indian textiles, a matching plate, for dresser fronts and consoles, and mixes in polished multifaceted finishes for accent tables or tabletops. For the Sept. 14 exhibit, Robinson creates a chandelier version of her dragon lamp made from folded paper, which has been featured in European publications.

Ann Parreñas: Her wires now a classic

ANN PARREÑAS combined sculptural sensibilities of molded wire and mirror motifs.

After taking up a course in Fashion Designing, Maria Antonietta "Ann" Tinkhuysen Parreñas received training jewelry set from stones, but from rivers, roots, flowers and petals. Resources were around by how she raised stones those organic and ephemeral materials into lasting objects of beauty just by molding.

Parreñas popularized the cage-like concept in furniture with her Cocoon chair, now manufactured by homeware silversmiths as a modern classic. It was made from a mesh of wires, inspired by the global orchid bauble.

She received awards for her surgeon or bubble patterns, the hair or fur ribbon covering design and metal spin whose inspiration became design elements.

Her furniture pieces are a mass of fine metal threads, interwoven in wires and wires. They become a hallmark of grids, intermediate lattice and pulsating lines.

Her newest piece, which combines the cast frame of the Cocoon, the loose and tight interweaving motif, the ribbon, the scintillating flow and the bubbles, serves as her portfolio and love seller.

For the exhibit, Parreñas will produce a compressed aluminum chair made from welded metal. Its beauty lies in its texture and sculptures qualities. "It will make a great accent chair."

Kenneth Cobonpue

From trained designer to [illegible] Filipino craftsmanship, [illegible] and indigenous [illegible] cutting-edge designs.

One of his main contributions [illegible] spatial concepts into a contemporary [illegible] his groundbreaking designs, [illegible] Zeus, was the first [illegible] wrapped with natural wicker.

Boxy, it was light, airy [illegible]. The wide mesh [illegible] in earthy textures of [illegible] grass, bamboo and abaca [illegible] trademark. The viewer could [illegible] the furniture. It not only [illegible] trademark, but it was also [illegible] other designers worldwide.

"I feel the furniture aspect [illegible] serves a compensation. The [illegible] get it to be comfortable and [illegible] it," Design comes second," [illegible] chairs.

In 2005, Cobonpue [illegible] most prestigious Design [illegible] award for the Lolah chair, [illegible] Filipino product among [illegible] item.

Unlike his earlier [illegible] Cobonpue's furniture [illegible] curling vent was long used [illegible] from cotton poles and organ [illegible] using the traditional [illegible]

"The other resource [illegible]

KENNETH Cobonpue's award-winning Lolah chair reflects the Filipino concept of transparency interpreted in cotton and wood framework.

Milo Naval: Famous for rigid lines and checkerboard weaving

MILO NAVAL'S furniture is characterized by simple, geometric shapes that highlight the contours of his materials and the weaving techniques.

Interior and furniture designer Milo Naval started out with award-winning accessories such as the Hermosa lamp made from cowrie shells. His signature pieces were characterized by straight-forward weaving using natural materials, and eventually the now-famous checkerboard weaving.

For export, he uses handwoven fabrics such as abaca and cebla, and native hyacinths for furniture, characterized by smooth, clean lines that lend a geometric quality. The simplicity of Naval's lines brings out the organic beauty of his materials.

Naval showed his playful side in a recent exhibit when he created a collection recycled from old newspapers, bottle caps, twigs, cartons, rubber tires and old bottles. Chairs and side tables made from corrugated boards, bottle caps and tires were snapped up.

He is working on a vegetal collection to be shown at the Interior Lifestyle and Garden exhibit.

"From the time we did the Valencia throne to this day, we're still producing handmade items. It's not that we're not doing new things. But the handmade aspect reflects the quality of our work," says Naval.

'Channeling' my cabl

THE CONSU
Linda B. Bal

HOW DO CABLE COMPANIES DECIDE what channels to drop and what to retain? Do they ask their subscribers before their make any changes? Do they know which ones are popular with their clients?

At the end of August, programs were being interrupted, as I watched television. Channels suddenly disappeared.

I called up my cable service provider, Global Destiny, to ask what was going on and was informed they were doing a "rechanneling," meaning they were changing channel assignments.

I do not remember being notified of this development so I was taken completely by surprise. I found out later that had the announcement on the channel that loved the lineup. How many subscribers actually check that channel everyday? Did they think every subscriber viewed that channel regularly?

After I have memorized the number assignments of my favorite channels, I rarely looked at the lineup, not even to check movie schedules.

Since there was nothing else I could do, I decided to just get those newcomers that are channel would be dropped. At the time, I could not find anymore the Turner Classic Movies (TCM) channel. I was assured it would be back as soon as they were through with the rechanneling although it would have a different number assignment.

That was then. Until now TCM is not on my TV and there seems to be even more Chinese language channels than before while most of the English channels have been assigned higher numbers.

I remember also asking Sydney, who SOX was dropped. If Global Destiny was going to bring it back. I was also assured then. It would be back soon. How soon is soon I still do not know.

It must have been two years ago or more when AXN disappeared from my TV screen.

Even the cable company knows its

'Poison' still on sale

The Bethlehem Coalition [illegible] the ban on the sale of the [illegible] substance [illegible] cyanide, is highly poisonous. The product could [illegible] obtained.

The group said it was [illegible] University of the Philippines [illegible] Poison Management and [illegible] find cases of accidental

n Beyond Brad Pitt

Kenneth Cobonpue
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method for boat building.
high-tech. The Lolah chair was

cited for its form and economy of materials. It's low-tech, and no machines were used to make it," he recalls.

The Voyage Intl., made of laser and metal, rewas. Unveiled in Intl., becomes a high-profile product when the press reported that Brad Pitt acquired it for Hollywood. Suddenly, the Angelina Jolie. "Bloopers a voyage to a world of dreams," explains Cobonpue, thus, the shape. That concept, too, was picked up by other designers.

Cobonpue recalls that Pitt was still married to Jennifer Aniston when he acquired other styles such as the Croissant sofa, advised for its free, transparent, economic shape and use of coconut lumber cores.

Cobonpue's other major playful designs such as the Koala chairs, the backrest of which looks like a bundle of reeds, but with the same lines and curves.

Lately his furniture has been more curvilinear, with the use of lattice technics (fabrics wrapped over the frames. The Harry weaves in a humorous take on Filipino and draggish. Others echo the patterns and textures of nature, such as the Leaf and Bird chairs.

Young at 48, Cobonpue has become an international name. His works are placed alongside those of modern icons such as Italian architect-designer Rodolfo Dordoni.

The Cebu-based designer says the core of his design is material and structure, where every element has a purpose.

TDM1 Gonzales' Genie chair is actually a capsule that suggests habitation.

Tony Gonzales: His chairs you can practically inhabit

Anthony "Tony" Gonzales has become known for innovating handmade paper in the '90s, experimenting with abaca and sabiga, the best fibers in the world. As a graphic designer, he has been making collages for international calendar competitions.

His involvement in Movement 8 challenged him into furniture design. His Genie and Melon chairs were selected for creating capsules that evoked a feeling of comfort and protection. The Melon chair takes the shape of the upturned fruit.

The Genie chair won the Good Design Award from the Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization (Jidpo) from abaca fibers and PVC with a metal framework. It is an oversized capsule, topped with playful little spires, which one can practically inhabit. Often the Genie chair sells its hollow-cushion.

"The concept was to make a home within a home or space within a space. It's not a four-legged chair but a space you can get in," he explains.

On the difference between his Genie and Melon and Ana Maniscalco's Cocoon chair, he says his concept is about confinement and cohabitation, while Maniscalco's chair is more open. "You could see yourself in the Genie and Melon Chair. You can lie down inside. Two people can get inside the Melon chair because there's a hole on the other side. You can interact."

As consultant for the Center for International Trade and Exposition Missions (Citem), he guides companies on product experimentation and shares his expertise.

"The Philippines is famous for design and product manipulations. The way we have turned shell or coconut husks into products has been one of our contributions," he says.

On his evolution, Gonzales says: "I don't like to design anything. It's passé for me. I'm more conceptual."

Tes Pasola: Paper is art

YES PASOLA'S
James Bound
Coffee line shows
how the technique
of making beads can
be translated into
home decor

She straddles the worlds of art and design and has been receiving accolades to both. Before her involvement with Movement 8, Yasmin "Tes" Pasola was producing canvas gift items.

Her work with MH inspired her to venture into collages that were either hand-molded or cut and sieved into sheets. She experimented with handmade paper infused with betas, leaves, shells, wires and seeds. The paper was also metal-formed into woven shapes.

Subsequently, she developed her signature James Bound Collection which earned her the Good Design Award from the Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization. Products such as lamps and vases came out. Her bowls and vases were flipped to give the objects volume and texture. They were made from delicat sheets of organic paper that were bounded.

Bookends were utilized to include where a removable metal vessel can hold the flowers. "This was more serious design," she says.

As an artist, she did a solo exhibit in Melbourne, Australia, where she was lauded for her experiments in paper as an installation and abstract sculptures, that were astonishing in shapes, texture and volume.

As in her commercial work, the uses paper cuts and recyclable materials for choice pieces. In one of the Manila EKOLE International fairs, she fashioned old newspapers into chevron and pinwheel shapes around tall circular poles. Most bowls and lamps in papier are a product of reuse, and the need to save the forest. Pasola reasoned to make a statement on how trash can be made into art.

"I use paper not because it is competitive, but because I feel strongly about caring for the environment," says Pasola.

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tudies of silver cleaners continued to increase despite the ban issued in July.

EcoWaters urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) to enforce strictly the ban on the sale of the chemical to protect people's lives.

It is pointed out that DENR director Jaime Antonio himself confirmed the highly toxic property of silver cleaners and the grave risks they pound to people's health.

Aside from cyanide, the environmental group said cleaners sold in the market as silver dip, silver polish and silver sparkle also contained chlorates, suspected to cause cancer, tube-filling, allergic skin reactions and liver damage. The products could be fatal if swallowed.

Other harmful chemicals in the cleaning products are ammonia, isopropanol, calcite acid and sulfuric acid.

Marisa Cabrera, EcoWaters president, said their new readers market investigations showed that the ban on the sale of cyanide and chemicals containing silver cleaners was largely ignored and consumers could still easily get the products from several jewelry shops.

Several of the organization's chemical safety volunteers visited 13 shopping malls in Caloocan, Manila and Quezon City and were able to buy from 15 shops silver jewelry cleaners, some of them without any label revealing the ingredients.

Cabrera said: "We hope that the DENR-EMB will exert every effort to rid the market of these toxic solutions to line with the goal of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management of improving measures to prevent and eliminate harmful effects of chemicals on public health and the environment."

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Floor Times Ave. cor. Maaralin and Tagaz Sts., 1201 Makati City; fax 897-2703/924-4144 mail thelifestyle@inquirer.com.ph.

University tour version of 'Exorcism of Emily Rose'

STAMATIS PETSONAKIS AND LA CONSOLACION College Mandaluyong Center for Theater Education's training and Digital Cinema present the stage adaptation of the film The Exorcism of Emily Rose," opening Sept. 11, with two matinees, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., at Mother Consuelo Barrete Theater, La Consolacion College, Mandaluyong, Manila.

Directed by Lito Casaje, the play features Jeanne Bautista, Alfonso Dava, Joel Caballero, Glyn Robles, Earl Ignacio, Danny Magpoc, Jane Pamugas, Marlon Rotor, Angel Pepe Reyes and Joel Rojas. Introducing Trixie Princess Emily Rose.

Tel. 0928.2076021/0908-8816335; e-mail lacitiscasaje@yahoo.com.

RP-Thai group

The recently organized Philippines-Thailand Cultural Association held its eleventh Excellent Relations Dinner at the Diamond Hotel in Manila.

Ambassador Pongsak Hoontrakul, undersecretary of Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Department of Foreign Affairs, inducted former ambassador to Thailand Jesse Robredo as president; Luis Villanueva, vice president; Fe Hernandez, secretary; Joseph Stanghini, deputy secretary; Gerry Barlow, treasurer; Antonio Hidalgo, auditor; Teresita Padilla, public information officer; Ernesto Rabaya, chair, membership; Mariano Santiago, legal counsel; and Minita Perez and Primitivo Garcia, directors.

The association aims to foster good Philippine-Thai relations and understanding through periodic cultural activities.

Torrijos at Avellana

Renowned artist Sandra B. Torrijos continues to explore sublime female power and quest for the spiritual in her show "Mariaisa," a mixed-media installation that plunges into the divine influence and effect of the female deity as part of her own personal transformative journey. The work, composed of found objects infused in bright Filipino color, creates a room that projects the illusion of spiritual energy, devotion and worship that venerates and adores this female mythical, mystical and mysterious Catholic symbol of the great mothering mother. Untitled (penis) body, 9:30 p.m., and will run until Sept. 30. Avellana Art Gallery is at 3000 F.B. Harrison St., Pasay City (Visiting Center Academy between Edsa and Libertad St.). Tel. 8550001; e-mail avellana_gallery@yahoo.com.

Interesting design challenge

Exotic furniture, rich accent pieces —students try to create winning space, and sales

By Kim T. Vergara

GIVEN THEIR ORDINARY designer and striking colors, antique bodices and Tibetan furniture pieces would sell as focal points. Combined with unintended and unfashionable modern pieces, these old-world gems can brighten and lend character to spaces.

But what do aspiring interior designers do when given accidental access to these unmarketable pieces? What do they see as fit?

To how can they produce marketable setup in a series of limited space while their task is to elevate product lines—including clothes, glass bedware and accessories and costume jewelry?

These groups of graduating students from the Philippine School of Interior Design faced such a challenge as Bohemian Station—a complex of four establishments, including Rose Cafe, at Westgate in Alabang—opened its Signature salon and spa with a design concept using merchandise in its furniture stores.

The four-floor complex architect Lee Cabiso, writer Opal Kirsanne and interior designer Rolando Lizarraga served as judges. Dubbed as "La Vie Boheme," the contest is part of the students' practicum.

The winning work will be on display at Bohemian Station showroom for a month. Apart from the judges, the public can also give its choices—there's a people's choice award.

GROUP 3, composed of graduating students from the Philippine School of Interior Design, won both the judges' and people's choice awards in Bohemian Station's newest design contest. PHOTOS BY KIMT. VERGARA

GROUP 1's entry was not a loose complex with a recessed double door leading to the living room.

GROUP 2 drew inspiration from what a retail store would look like. They used as their display on a glass-topped chest with a tableau to display semi-precious jewelry.

For almost two years now, Bohemian Station has been known for its diverse range of antiques and pre-owned South Asian and Tibetan furniture and home accents, including lamps, area rugs, and carved objects such as carved double doors, ceiling counterparts and windows. It also sells a good mix of real and costume jewelry.

Group 1, represented by Karen Lopez, chose to do a basic setup: a heavy double door as the entrance to a mini-living room and an arch to frame the center space. Ceramic dominoes pieces from Tibet and chunky necklaces from India give the space hints of color.

"We needed to break the monotony from all that brown, wooden furniture from India," said Lopez.

"Thanks to accent pieces such as the orange wooden cabinet, I believe we managed to make the display more attractive."

Since time is the key, they could do to achieve contrast, Lopez and her team simply combined big and small pieces to temper visual overload and keep their display from looking too monotonous.

Rosanna Gonzalez and the rest of Group 2 had a different concern. They had to settle for what's available, leaning heavily the latter group to "sleep" for items. Unlike groups 1 and 3, they showcased their display on a large glass-top wooden chest with a series of niches or indentations.

Instead of leaning each cabinet into corners, the group displayed Bohemian Station's items in jewelry pieces adorned with crystal stones. They then covered the chest with a clear sheet of thick, tempered glass.

Apart from adding color, clothes hanging in a corner serve as an alternative hand-setup composed primarily of heavy wooden objects, including display cabinets. "The difficult is to make the showcase look more like a shop than a house," said Gonzalez, was deliberate.

As a glance, group 3, represented by Mary Campos, seemed literally at a disadvantage. Unlike their schoolmates in the ground floor, the group did their setup on the second floor.

On the contrary, said Campos, as she showed us their tiles of a supposed socialite traveler's main living room. Thanks to a fourth group, which backed out, Campos said her team have almost the entire second floor all to themselves. They were never at loss in dressing up windows and ceiling with lamps and drapes to lure people in.

"The bigger space is certainly an advantage," she said. "Since we were given unlimited access to display merchandise, anything was also a big concern. We balanced colors by adding hints of saffron and green to all that brown."

While Lizarraga emphasized selection in "rough look," he conceded, given that each group was limited to certain pieces and arranging. However we more concerned about how each group made their displays appealing to customers.

"The main point of the entire exercise is to entice shoppers to linger and admire merchandise on display," she said. "You can see a display's selling appeal is important. If somebody were to go for less a store, in that case must a display move."

CONTRASTING shapes and textures

But she also cited subtle and creative efforts that went into each group's concept. Group 3, for instance, Hesamin pointed out, succeeded in adding an imaginary division and highlighting a brown Tibetan cabinet by putting it back to back with a sturdy bookcase.

Cabiso lauded the students' attempts to create "showpiece" arrangements in the store spaces at a real house. He also noted the way certain groups highlighted accent and furniture pieces to produce exclusive displays.

"And unless you fully understand a studio display," he said, "most of them deviated from their respective drawings."

BRIGHT throw pillows break the all-brown monotony.

LIFESTYLE Parenting

Mom at the Ballet Philippines

THE ALTHOUGH lines ballet because of the grace, discipline and passion of a gentler time.

I tell my sons that there was a much gentler time when grace and manners counted, when people had to toil as the dancers do, putting in 10 hours daily to perfect a craft, when hard work and effort were appreciated and applauded

By Ana de Villa Singson
Contributor

JUST SIX MONTHS AGO, I would have never thought that I would be wearing the night's ruby red colors as a focal icon of the 40th season gala of Ballet Philippines. While I appreciate culture and watch plays, concerts and dances both here and abroad, I would have never dreamed of firsthand involvement in our country's premier dance company's gala.

But fate has a strange way of opening doors and presenting you new unexpected visions. Happily enticed, I received a phone call from a former col league, Ballet Philippines was in need of my marketing and sales expertise just for three months to get things organized and going—would I want to help? Before I could even blink, I was enlisted into the heady world of dance.

MOM AT 52

GARFIELD

A. LIPIN

FUGAO BABOY

DICK TRACY

LOVEHUNGRY

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY

BABY BLUES

TULDOK

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BY FRANCIS DRAKE

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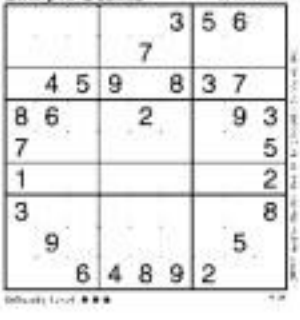

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answers to previous puzzle

8	2	5	6	1	3	7	9	4
1	3	4	7	9	5	6	2	8
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7	5	3	9	4	1	2	8	6
9	1	8	5	6	2	3	4	7
3	8	9	1	5	6	4	7	2
5	7	2	4	3	9	8	6	1
4	6	1	8	2	7	9	3	5

How to handle outbursts of kids with ADHD

IT'S BEEN MANY YEARS now since he left my classroom. But to this day, I remember him clearly because he touched my life in a special way, expanding my understanding and inspiring me to advocate for others like him.

Miguel (not his real name) was a junior college student in my Psychology class at the season. He would sit in the front row and immediately doze off from time to time, stare at the distance or blurt out his thoughts in the middle of my lecture. For some reason, in spite of his odd behaviour, I could never find it in my heart to get mad at him or call attention to his nonchalant bizarre antics. My student's instinct kicked in, and I knew there was something special about him. He wrote the most insightful reflection papers and diary never failed to move me.

Towards the end of the semester, one of the days, he told me he had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). I was thankful! I had never embarrassed him in class. I told him I was proud of the way he carried me and that he must have had wonderful parents to give him the support he needed to finish his course.

His final paper was about his condition, paying tribute to his parents and teachers who gave him unconditional love and support. Today he is the assistant coach of a high school basketball team and I am so proud to see how far he has come.

ROOTS AND WINGS

Cathy Babao-Gotladera

Early intervention

Tor Gerona Del Rosario, a special education specialist based in San Francisco, says early intervention is the key in managing and successfully helping a child with ADHD. Del Rosario, who herself has a child who was diagnosed with possible ADHD at a very early age, enrolled in a graduate course on SPED as the University of the Philippines so she could better help her son.

"It's very important to be an observant parent. Nothing will come out of it if you deny the situation, you only make things more difficult for you and your child."

Del Rosario says that after a proper assessment, behavior modification and sports can be a great first line of defense. "Sports can help direct have a lot of excess energy. In fact, before entering the classroom each day, I usually suggest some form of mild exercise just to loosen them up. And they are ready for the day."

Proper medication are often an issue with children who have been diagnosed with ADHD. A child undergoing a medication can be a very stressful experience for both the parent and child.

The online KOOmade magazine provides helpful tips for parents to help manage ADHD outbursts. The suggestions, given by Dr. Carol Brady, an ADHD specialist, may also be applied to any child, whether he has ADHD or not, undergoing a temper tantrum. Here are five of them:

1. Discuss parental bothersome in advance. Study says that if your child receives does potential disappointment is in store, he will be able to plan how to react. For example, if there is a book that your child wants to purchase at the bookstore but you know it's out of stock, you can say "Last time we were there, the book was not available. I remember you got really disappointed. What do we do if you get disappointed today?"

2. Acknowledge your child's disappointment. Let your child know that you can see he is disappointed, and you understand why he feels that way. Show that you understand him and that you are there to help him through the problem.

3. Always have a "Plan B." Help your child realize that even if he doesn't get his first choice, he may be satisfied with a second or even a third choice. When eating out, for example, and your child insists on having a cheese and mushroom pizza, and there is none, you can opt for a similar alternative (say pepperoni and cheese) but explain ahead of time that this may happen and prevent an outburst at the dining table.

4. Use a carrot-and-stick approach to discourage outbursts. In the scenario described above, if your child accepts the pepperoni and cheese pizza peacefully, tell him that he can have an extra 20 minutes with the computer because he displayed good behavior.

5. Show your child how you deal with disappointment. Again, role-modeling plays an important part in whether or not your child has ADHD or not. Explain to him that life is not always fair and letdowns are expected. If he can see that you are patient and flexible in dealing with disappointment too, this is something that the child will easily imbibe and learn from you.

Powerful tool

Del Rosario also suggests getting in touch with other parents who are in a similar situation. "Advocating for your child or for other children can be very helpful and powerful." In the United States, she says, there are in place because of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy put in place by former President George Bush where all children have equal rights, especially those who have learning disabilities.

"We have a long way to go here in terms of programs for children with ADHD, but because awareness has been created, parents have slowly become more open to having their children diagnosed. Early intervention and behavior modification are the keys. "Medicine only when extremely necessary," Del Rosario says.

In the Philippines, parents can seek guidance from the ADHD Society. It cannot inside the Ateneo de Manila University (tel. 426-6060), on how to better manage their child with special needs.

Once in a while, I see Miguel (not his name) on the basketball court and my heart expands in joy at his success. Now he understands love and support have taken him. It takes a village to raise a child, special needs notwithstanding.

E-mail the author at cathy.babao@gmail.com

Mom at the Ballet Philippines

From page D1

A firm believer in "dance as dance" (opinion versus opinion results in greater truth), I conducted a series of focus group discussions by talking to different audience groups (in my moderating world and training: Consumers, in this case the audience, is King).

It was an eye-opener to find out that some of them were intimidated by Ballet Philippines, thinking that the group doesn't only classical ballet (ancient: The group performs an entire spectrum of dances, from classical to neo-classical to modern and neo-Filipino), that CCP (where it stages its shows) was the enclave of the rich and the powerful, and that one had to wear coat and tie or high heels and a long gown with expensive jewelry to enjoy an evening.

The biggest myth was that each ticket cost more than P2,000 (answer: Tickets start at P350, less than the price of a movie ticket).

There was much soul-searching in the company, some reorganizing and a reluctant solution that was summed up in its newly-minted slogan: "We dance for you!"

SPOTTING: the ruby-red colors as the 40th season gala is led with her sons Manuel and Gabriel and Ballet Philippines' Angel Ramos and Margie Fuensalida.

Dance of life

It's Ballet Philippines wooing their hearts on their sleeves and telling you that they dance the story of every Filipino's life. Is it culture through "Ugnayan," history through "Alon of the Mizanes" and "La Revolucion," or love in "Gamo-Gamo ng Mirasol" and reinforcement in "Swimming Ilog Pasig."

For starters, Ballet Philippines' arsenal of over 400 choreographies will have it. Because the group has been here since 1969, the largest standing local ballet-Asian dance company—shooting, recording, dancing for the entertainment of Filipino life.

The group is propagating its messages by performing where the audiences go, now doing outside premieres at the SM Megamall's Atrium and Podium to standing room only, mixes of office workers, children and moms. It is inviting viewers to come to CCP as their regular salon and is even hosting a special show for P99 a ticket—in way of thanking Filipinos for 40 wonderful years.

The group is also partnering with the Manila Symphony Orchestra so that live music will heighten the future experience for upcoming shows like the "Nutcracker."

Much gentler time

My son knew me. "Ballet Philippines again, Mom. Why are you always doing things for Ballet Philippines?"

I beg my children and tell them that there was a time, a much gentler time when we did not have computers and cell phones, when grace and manners counted, when people had to toil at the dances to, putting in 18 hours daily to perfect a craft, when hard work and effort were appreciated and applauded. There was a time when we could step and savor life instead of pressing buttons in an unending digital battle on the PSP, Wii or the computers. There is gallantry in the raising, grace in a pirouette, discipline in an arabesque and effort could to appear effortless in a simple pointe. There, too, is respite, an interlude, almost like a prayer, when a dancer leaps and your heart leaps with him or her to a happy place. And I tell my sons that dance is like a selection to a world—a happy world.

It has been six months since I entered the lonely world of Ballet Philippines. Since then I have met many wonderful people and have been invited to join their board. Since then I have been collaborating with them to build a dance-selling sales force and to offer our unparalleled choreography and dance services for corporate launches and social events. We are even setting up a wonderful rental service so that everyone can rent the beautiful costumes you see flaming onstage.

I have listened to dance scores and heard my own music as well. Inspired by the dancers' daily routine, I have rediscovered music and am playing the piano again.

My cousin is ailing, my youngest does, but that's okay: no ballet, it takes daily practice and continuous effort. And then one day I will take that leap and I will play "Clair de Lune" and "Madrilena" with dexterity again. That's what you get from ballet, Ballet Philippines. Discovery and ambition. Merci you for Ballet Philippines do the same for you!

The next show is "Tales of the Blossom," a rock opera dance by Ima Kintanar's popular songs like "Hoang Hoang Buenham." It is a mythical story about the first man and woman and the creation of the world; it was written by National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera. Tickets start at P299. Show schedule, Oct. 23, 24, 25 at the CCP Cult Theketer at 893-8099 or Ballet Philippines at 311-8225.

New infant fashion brand

LITTLE WISHES IS HERE WITH LINE OF clothes for infants. The line comes in purely soft cool graphic prints and is made from durable cotton.

Dress your bundle of joy with Little Wishes clothes at the Infants' Wear Department of all SM stores.

ONE-PIECE long-sleeved bonnie for cute and adorable little ones

A BUTTON-DOWN shirt and pull-on pants are perfect for keeping baby warm.

DRESS your bundle of joy with colorful Little Wishes' onesie.

A BUTTON-DOWN shirt and pull-on pants

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GO NEGOSYO hosts, guests and "negotrepreneurs." Stylish women of substance and stature Maricel Laxa-Pangilinan; TV's cyberstreet Karen Davila; Go Negosyo first lady Marissa. Concepcions: the brains behind it all, Joey Concepcion, Andy Ferreria; and Anthony Pangilinan.

FLOY SHE Nation's Gabby Cal

SAF Luna-Alabastro supports PCE-Go Negosyo mem.

PBMD and Vic Sotto

DEAN Pao and Caroline Lapid

FOLLOWERS and experts. Rica Limcaoco, Myla Villanueva and Joanne Rae Ramirez

Joey Concepcion launches '21 Steps on How to Start Your Own Business'

JOEY CONCEPCION IS A GENTLEMAN of sources who truly cares and has a brilliant mind with a heart of gold. He recently launched "21 Steps on How to Start Your Own Business" as part of the Go Negosyo book series, a must-have book, duhlings, it provides Filipinos with "proven, down, as well as tried and tested formulas in starting, sustaining and succeeding in a business."

"After three books aiming to inspire people, it is time that we come out with a book on 'How to Negosyo,'" said Concepcion, the awesome founding mentor of Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship (PCE).

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Yan Hagoyo using PIXEL Photo Solutions

"By getting this book, you will be bold and will have your level of self-confidence in putting up a business."

Authored by Beau Ibai Lapid of the Entrepreneurs School of Asia, and self-help guru and motivational speaker Peng Soria, the book is a guide to start a business, and has "myth-busting anecdotes that will free one from ill preconceived notions that discourage him/her fulfilling his dream."

"The challenge to start a business is the 'getting started' part," added Concepcion. "They have the fear, the so many questions on 'how to,' and the usual questions on governance and taxes... But the government and tape part of putting up a business is nothing compared to the real challenges. With this book, although it may not answer answers to negosyo you aspire, it will definitely give you better chance to succeed," Concepcion concluded.

For all aspiring entrepreneurs, PCE's other books are "Go Negosyo 50 Inspiring Entrepreneurial Stories," "Go Negosyo 50 Inspiring Stories of Entrepreneurs (Celebrity Edition)," and "Go Negosyo 55 Inspiring Stories of Women Entrepreneurs," all available at National Book Store branches, duhlings.

With introduction of the new face of Angelpreneurs, who aim to help more Filipinos entrepreneurs soar to the top.

PCE, a nonstock and nonprofit organization, bids to make the Philippines a thriving entrepreneurial nation by instilling among Filipinos a mind-set of optimism and a culture of entrepreneurship.

Check it out, people. After all, no guts, no glory. Di bala, pabonggan?

Luis Aldana's 71st birthday

Surprise bashes come and go, but this was one awesome birthday party for business magnate and vintage car collector, popular Consul Luis Aldana's 71st hosted by his family—business wife, the current, wife Sheller, twin Mary and Barbara, and daughter Gretchen Grypsin, duhlings.

It ain't easy to hide a secret from Louie to his wife, Consul of Guatemala Sheller Bustamante-Aldana and daughter Gianina had made up a story that they "were attending a fashion show."

To get Louie to the Manila Polo Club, his one Mary told his dad they had to meet a friend to discuss plans of "buying another car to add to his collection." But more difficult were planning the bash, pabonggan, and keeping a minimum number of guests. Lily del Rosario and Marilet Ilagan suggested the menu for that evening. While Jet Carpio hired go-go dancers for a dash of fun, duhlings.

As always, talented and multitalented Ambassador Luis Aldana's 71st birthday party at the Manila Polo Club. Photos by Alex Yan Hagoyo using PIXEL Photo Solutions

As emceed the Turf Room of the Manila Polo Club into an elegant disco with colorful gallery. Guests included the Association of Shareholders of the Philippines, Jaycees, Lion and the diplomatic corps.

Well, pabonggan, needless to say, it was a well-planned party with no one "spilling the beans."

Louie is to the Manos, duhlings, is always four o'clock, colorful happening like this.

Cheers to our King for a Day, Luis Aldana, Consul General of Zambia.

New Rizal ballroom dazzles

Makati Shangri-La welcomed our town's crème de la crème to the official relaunch of its fabulous renovated jewel, the Rizal ballroom, with a theatrical and opulentan ballroom called "The Debut: Rizal Ballroom Relaunched," duhlings.

The renovated ballroom, still the most posh and spacious events venue in the city, lived up to its lavish splendor with a magnificent program, overflowing champagne and gastronomical pleasures.

Society's elegant set enjoyed the awesome opening and breathtaking mention that evoke timeless refinement, pabonggan.

In his short speech, well-respected Hotel Shangri-La, said, "This evening, we will not talk about the five thirty-we've seen not will we brag about the intelligence of our light servers. This evening is going to be about celebration." And celebrate we all did, duhlings, with scrumptious cuisines centered with the "Banana Jelly" roasted extravaganza directed by multitalented Sudhir Gurnani, to list.

"This is only a preview of more memorable affairs to happen at the Rizal Ballroom," said one of the hotel's honor, supreme mario, Joy Pacumio, pabonggan.

Contact Mercedes Alfonso, assistant communications manager, Makati Shangri-La, Manila, at 8128888 local 7100, e-mail: as-mcom@shangri-la.com, for information.

GO NEGOSYO with trainees and supporters. Rommel Juan, executive director Ramon Lopez, Mac Diaz, brilliant founding trainer Joey Concepcion, Jolvin Kou; Mylene Alava, Tin Dimasalang-an, Penny Antonio, Dean Pao Lapid and Ping Soria

DIAZ interviews Lapid of the Entrepreneurs School of Asia and self-help guru and motivational speaker Soria.

MARIETTE Aghayani, Margrou Khanni, Camille Aghayani, Makati Shangri-La's area manager DP Reiz Khanni and Carlo Sibal

BEAUTIFUL Chiichi Salas; Consul of Guatemala Hollie Romero Aldana; King of the Day, Consul General of Zambia Louis Aldana; and honorary ambassador Bambi Harper

JOHNNY Velasquez, Maura Labrega and Makati Shangri-La's Sergio Mazza

JOPS Grypsin

CZARINA A. Grypsin and children Arianna and Kai

MARGARITA Rizzuti and Marietta Santos

MAKATI Shangri-La director of communications Joy Wanamar and training manager Lina Kantarea

CINDAR de Guzman and Tessa Mateo

PAZITA de Guzman, businesswoman Ely Tantuanco and Tita de Guzman

GWYNNE of the socialite Vickson; Ayalaistan, Natasha Marie and Diana Ng

CO-CHAIR Rose Marie Lazaro, chair Karen Hurvasan, president Nonie Basilio, co-chairs Mabel Abaño and Benita Linaza

BABY Girly, Tessie Rodrigo, Nena Lozano, Chino Enriquez, Lolo Casasnovas and Mimi Valerio

CWC annual ball

They are turning 80, duhlings, and celebrating it with a grand ball called "Sag Aabig Kalimpon Sa Ngayon," Sept. 11, 8:30 p.m., at the Main Lounge of the Polo Club. The Filipiniana motif is reminiscent of the era of our nation's history, pabonggan.

A fashion de bonne led by CWC's dedicated president Nonie Basilio and past presidents, plus a chichinic press dubbi members performed by CWC members, will highlight the event.

Proceeds will support the newly launched vocational scholarship program for the poor to cooperators with the Don Bosco Technical Institute of Makati and other club charities.

Chair of that year's ball is adorable Karen Hurvasan with co-chairs Rose Lazaro, Benita Linaza and Mabel Abaño.

Check it out. It's going for a good cause while having a great time, duhlings.

Also known as Q. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

Top 10 films at the US box office

TESSIE Tomas, Mylene Dizon and Eugene Domingo in "100"

5 special retrospectives set in Greece and Russia

By Rozel Sarmiento Jr.

FIFTEEN FILIPINO FILMS ARE bound for international festivals in the last quarter of the year—with two countries mounting special retrospectives on the Philippines.

Apart from Busan in South Korea, Rizzle Kristofer Thenardier Ebarvia and Shalimar Ocampo Saguil have also chosen the Philippines as this year's "country of honor," says independent producer Alfonso Cuarón.

The 7th Pacific-Meridian International Film Festival, to be held in Vladivostok from Sept. 19 to 25, has come up with a program called "Focus on the Philippines."

According to its website, among the films featured in the retrospective are Chris Martinez's "100" (titled "All It Is"), Auraeus Solito's "Ang Huling Birhen sa Pilipinas" ("The Last Virgin in the Philippines"), Jeffrey Jeturian's "Kubrador" ("Bookie"), Jade Castro's "Sigwa" ("Storm"), Adolfo Alix Jr.'s "Adela"), Francis Pasion's "Ate" ("Sister"), Brillante Mendoza's "Kinatay" ("Slaughtered"), Dondon Santos' "Rolyo" ("Spool"), Auraeus Solito's "Astig" ("Cool"), Mike Tuviera's "Ang Babae sa Septic Tank" ("The Woman in the Septic Tank"), Erik Matti's "On the Job," Joel Lamangan's "Ligo na, Lola" ("Bathe Now, Grandma"), Cesar Montano's "Bahay Kubo" ("Nipa Hut"), Jose Javier Reyes' "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo" ("Sakal, Sakali, Help"), Jerrold Tarog's "Confessional" and Chito Roño's "Crying Ladies."

Also featured are Lav Diaz's "Death in the Land of Encantos," Raya Martin's "Independencia" and Mario O'Hara's "Tatlong Taong Walang Diyos" ("Three Years Without God").

Ebarvia's "Colorum" and Saguil's "Ang Pagbabalik ng Kwago" ("The Return of the Owl") are also competing with entries from Greece, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine and Venezuela.

(TURN TO PAGE C5)

15 RP films off to int'l film festivals

LUIS Manzano plays John Lloyd Cruz's lover in "In My Life."

Luis: Gay role came as shocker

By Marinel R. Cruz

LUIS MANZANO ORIGINALLY TURNED down the role of a gay lover to John Lloyd Cruz's character in the film "In My Life," because it required him to have "intimate scenes" with another man, the actor confessed.

"The offer to do a gay role came as a shocker. I know there has to be some intimacy between John Lloyd and me, and I didn't want to do it," Luis said during a media gathering at the ABS-CBN offices in Quezon City last week. "After reading the script, however, I understood my character..."

Luis plays Mark, an advertising executive based in New York City. Mika Lloyd is Mark, Rhett's lover. Luis' real-life mom, award-winning actress Vilma Santos, also plays his mother Shirley in the film. She visits him in New York and is shocked to discover that he has other lovers. Olivia Lamasan directs.

"When I pitched the story to Luis, I was really confident that he would accept it. It's an opportunity for him to work with his mother and to get featured in a dramatic film. I got the shock of my life when he immediately told 'no'," said Lamasan. "I told him to read the script first. I felt happy that in the end, he accepted the role."

(TURN TO PAGE C5)

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GALLERIA

1 LAND OF THE LOST	6 UP (Digital 3D)
2 KIMMY DORA	7 UP
3 YEAR ONE	8 LEAP YEAR / I LOVE YOU, BETH COOPER
4 THE FINAL DESTINATION	9 G.I. JOE / BRUNO
5 AND I LOVE YOU SO	10 DISTRICT 9

ERMITA

1 UP / BRUNO	4 DISTRICT 9
2 YEAR ONE	5 KIMMY DORA
3 THE FINAL DESTINATION	6 AND I LOVE YOU SO
	7 THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE / LAND OF THE LOST

METRO EAST

1 YEAR ONE	5 LAND OF THE LOST
2 THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE / BRUNO	6 UP / G.I. JOE
3 KIMMY DORA	7 AND I LOVE YOU SO
4 THE FINAL DESTINATION	8 DISTRICT 9

NOVALICHES

1 YEAR ONE	1 THE FINAL DESTINATION
2 KIMMY DORA	2 YEAR ONE
3 AND I LOVE YOU SO	3 KIMMY DORA
4 LAND OF THE LOST	4 LAND OF THE LOST

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STA. ROSA

1 KIMMYDORA	1 THE HANGOVER
2 THE HANGOVER	2 TAROT
3 YEAR ONE	3 AND I LOVE YOU SO
4 AND I LOVE YOU SO	4 KIMMY DORA

LIPA

DASMARINAS

1 AND I LOVE YOU SO	1 AND I LOVE YOU SO
2 SHORTS	2 LAND OF THE LOST
3 YEAR ONE	3 YEAR ONE
4 KIMMY DORA	4 KIMMY DORA

IMUS

STARMILLS

1 TAROT	4 KIMMY DORA
2 AND I LOVE YOU SO	5 YEAR ONE
3 ALIENS IN THE ATTIC	6 DISTRICT 9

ANGELES

1 ALIENS IN THE ATTIC	1 YEAR ONE
2 AND I LOVE YOU SO	2 LOL: LOVE ON LINE
3 KIMMY DORA	3 ORPHAN
4 YEAR ONE	

TACLOBAN

BACOLOD

1 YEAR ONE	1 ALIENS IN THE ATTIC
2 AND I LOVE YOU SO	2 AND I LOVE YOU SO
3 KIMMY DORA	3 KIMMY DORA
4 DISTRICT 9	4 YEAR ONE
5 DISTRICT 9	5 BRUNO
6 BRUNO	6 DISTRICT 9

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SUM HILEY and Bea Alonzo in Lauren Dyogi's comeback film "And I Love You So"

Restricted, restricting

"AND I LOVE YOU SO," LAURENTI DYOGI'S comeback in Bea Alonzo, benefits from his brisk storytelling style and the focused performance of Bea Alonzo as the initially grieving female protagonist. She plays a young widow whose misery is alleviated by the new man in her life (Sam Milby), who unfortunately turns out to be carrying his own load of emotional "baggage" that eventually scars their relationship—until the story's recovering upbeat denouement, of course.

This film is more than just the usual tangle and hurdles-to-cross, because it touches on issues related to self-search, growing up emotionally, and finding your own happiness.

Trouble is, these promising thematic tasks are occasionally sidelined or thrown away by a number of distractions.

Alonzo's portrayal holds up well, but Milby does not illustrate his performances with enough cogent insights to establish him as the real star of the movie. Aside from his difficulty with the Filipino language, he also tends to "decorate" his performance rather than to really listen and richly flesh out the core of his character.

Of course, part of the problem can be attributed to the production's emphasis on "Kilig," for the fans' sweetness. Unfortunately, however, Alonzo is able to reveal many of the

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

heroine's inherent pitfalls, simply by understanding and relating to her character in a more insightful way.

Forming now on director Dyogi's work, we're glad that he's come back to film directing after years of concentrating on TV reality shits and talent searches. What he brings to the cinematic table is a sensitive yet deft touch and overt energetic sensibility that bodes itself well to young adult stories of this sort.

My exact point is, however, that Dyogi's years-long dalliance with television may have negatively affected his film work in a minor way: Some scenes in his comeback film have a too close-cropped, "TV" feel to them, which limits the scope that full-length features should have.

This is not yet a major problem, but the director should think about it and, if he ends up agreeing with our observation, he should make sure that his next feature is less visually restricted and restricting.

On Second Avenue

Mondays at 10 p.m., the Second Avenue channel telecasts "Faith and Hits," an entertaining and instructive sitcom about a free-spirited single mom who has found a new love.

Imagine her surprise, therefore, when her newly-divorced daughter comes home to disrupt the joy and peace of her new love nest. Of course, her daughter Hits is even more surprised to see her "old" mom so prodigiously in love and living the cougar's life to the hilt.

'Surrogates'

In Jonathan Mostow's new sci-fi thriller, "Surrogates," people are living their lives from the safety of their homes via robotic surrogates—physically perfect mechanical representations of themselves. These robots are fit, remotely controlled machines that ultimately assume the original people's life roles. It's an ideal world where crime, pain, lost and consequences don't exist.

But, how long can such a utopia last? When the first murder in years jolts the police, FBI agent Greer (Bruce Willis) discovers a vast conspiracy beyond the surrogate phenomenon, and he is compelled to abandon his new surrogate and risk his life to unravel the mystery.

Jordin Sparks' 'Battlefield'

American Idol winner Jordin Sparks' second album "Battlefield" includes some of her own songs, including "911 Emergency," "What I the Only One" and "The Cure," in her singing on the album, it's been praised for its "heartfelt country-soul dexterity."

Other cuts penned by Di. Lukas, "I Panic and Mary Mayfield include a cover of "Don't Let It Go to Your Head" and "Let the Music Play."

On TV

On Discovery Channel at 10 p.m. every Monday, "Survivorman" documents Les Stroud's adventures as he spends nine harrowing weeks alone in a variety of survival situations.

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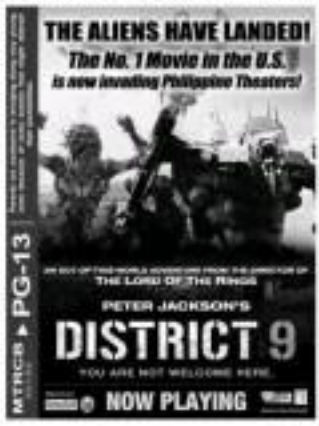


Luis: Gay role came as shocker

From page 01

meeting he said no."

Vilma pointed out that she did nothing to convince her son to change his mind. "I just want to tell everyone that I was never part of (ex Clinton's negotiations with Lucky (Luis' nickname). From the start, I already told our bosses that they can't expect me to call Lucky to convince him to do it, because I won't," said Vilma, also the governor of Batangas province.

John Lloyd explained the need for an intimate scene with Luis. "The scene gives the viewers an idea of how much Noel and Mark really love each other," he said. "We prepared for it. We waited for the right time and made sure the setting was perfect before shooting it."

No kissing

Luis added: "In the film, you won't see John Lloyd and me kissing but you will see Noel and Mark sharing a very beautiful moment."

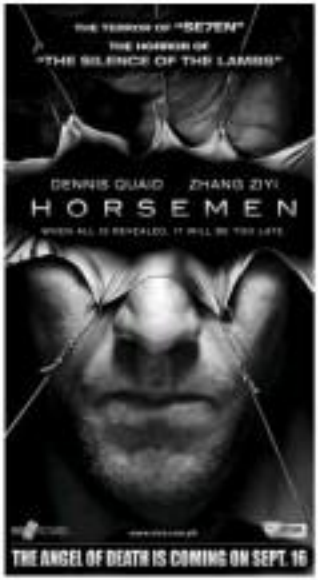
John Lloyd, who made headlines recently with his movie "A Very Special Love" and his sequel "Sex: Changed My Life" with Sarah Geronimo, said he is thrilled to be part "In My Life."

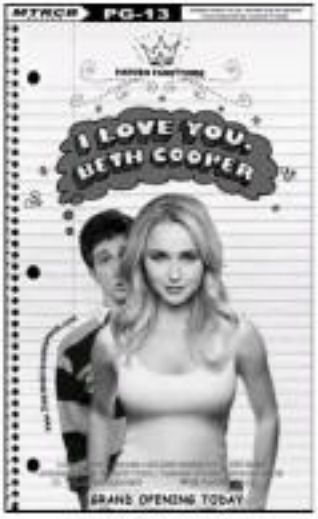
"It would definitely [be] if I like[working with Jay M and being a movie [Movie]. I would compare it to getting my driving for the first time," said John Lloyd. "Time you're in the plane, you really have no choice but to jump. If you chicken out, sasama ang loob mo and you will regret not doing it for the rest of your life. I took the challenge, no matter how scared I was..."

John Lloyd also confessed to having a case of Vilma. "I just do my own scenes and watch him do his stuff. He's amazing. I understand that Aga Vilma must be interesting when the camera is not rolling. That's when you'd get to see a lot of good things about her. You'd see how well the talent can sell her assets when on the set, how she treats all of us as her equal, and how she feeds us with sumptuous lechugas and if we're all fat," he said.

"In My Life," written by Raymond Lee and friendly Quezonnators in local theaters on Sept. 16.

E-mail mariss@inquirer.com.ph





A SCENE from "Independencia"

15 RP films . . .

From page E1

Australia, Russia, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Madrid-based, among others.

This year, "Independencia" also has screenings in the Toronto, Croatia and New York fests, reports Cuenca. "For local audiences, it will be running at the Gen Atkinson in SM Cinema Sept. 14 to 20."

In October, "Independencia" will be featured at fests in Aligas (Spain), Vancouver (Canada), Adelfa (Turkey), Ghent (Belgium), Grenada, Mumbai (India), Vienna (Austria) and Thessaloniki, the rest.

The country will also be given a tribute by the Nyon Documentary Film Festival, said Noora Lassen of the SF Film Institute.

Main competition

Apart from the six competing Philippine entries, Lav Diaz's "Francis 2000 Boys" is also in the main competition of the Gerik fest set from Nov. 13 to 22.

"Boxing" produces Albert Almendrala says his film was also invited to the NKR Anglo-section of Paris and the main competition of Vancouver. It will also have screenings in Hokkaido Directed and the Asian Film Festival in Mumbai.

Apart from Toronto and Brussels (Belgium), Mike Sandejas' Gimmedays entry "Sleep Sana Kita" has also been picked by the Hawaii International Film Festival which runs from Oct. 15 to 25.

Nominated

Another Cinemalaya entry, Ina Agabin's "24K," is nominated for the Golden Orchid narrative feature award in Munich as well.

And, Lamangan's "Dukot" and Rondel Berdonio's "Kasi Nagsisi" are off to the World Film Festival in Montreal (Canada), ongoing until Sept. 7.

Meanwhile, debuts Alex "Ananas," admits was clapped early on "X" by the MTRCB, will compete in the Southeast Asian section of the Bangkok fest from Sept. 24 to 30.

Two other Philippine films, Mario's "Independencia" and Ahead Archuleta Sanchez's "Imbasol," are also competing in the Southeast Asian category along with films from Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

Ahanna and Abe's "Manila" is featured in Bangkok's Screenscene section and in the Oberhausen fest in Germany this month, too.

Winner

Eraldo Abe's "Endio" won the Golden Award in the Jeggo-DEPDC Asian Film Festival held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Abe's "Ajalo" is also part of the Busan Ad Project screening in Jacarabon Cinemathegue in Busan, too.

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Aging actor has kinky bedroom habit

A TITLE FOR HIM RELATES THAT AGING actor has a kinky bedroom habit.

Actor clings to 18, Ad likes playing with fire—specifically, with lit candles. The melting wax of which he loves dripping on hard muscles.

Who knew acold-mannered AA can be a roller in private?

Embarrassing reputation

Beautiful GMC who always looks fresh and glamorous on, and off-screen, has earned an embarrassing reputation among stylists.

BG has always been rumored as a private diamond, but now she's being shunned for her smelly feet.

A stylist complained that the former beauty queen wears by BF underarthing lines.

In the same boat

There are persistent rumors that Diva and Actress broke up with Pinoy Idol because of the guy's underwhelming assets.

It is said to have taken place in Celebrity Bed who also had to carry pa- rumors in his younger years.

It is in the same boat as Gabi Manalo- thrub who successfully wooed Young Starlet.

Fate of IS have expressed concern be- on an OB gone thin although close to Season Nine? where they claimed on a reality show and have on a regular program together.

GB and IS give a fresh spin to the term "Teammates," says a source.

'Perfect host'

Rupert Celeb acted as perfect host to the Filipino delegation during a major international film festival.

Until RC saw the local film set- tured in the city.

Apparently, RC hated the fact that the movie tackled poverty and other assorted problems.

Inducing La Intellific, EC quipped: "Why not show the way the good and the beautiful?"

Visibly upset, RC literally lost figure- thority) slammed the door of the family's home and ran to the contiguity.

"But take a seat back in your heart," RC harshly told Our Pinoys after the screening.

Most downloaded song

LONDON—Lady Gaga's single "Poker Face" is the most downloaded song in Britain in the five years since download charts were first compiled, the Official UK Charts Company said Sunday.

Digital sales now make up 98 percent of the singles market.

The New York singer, 23, known for her outlandish dress sense, topped the all-time chart.

"Poker Face" registered 779,000 downloads, while "Bad Dance," her first single release in Britain, came third in the chart with 760,000.

-AFP

LADY Gaga's "Poker Face" is the most downloaded song in the UK. -

Momoweb's impact

DETROIT—On Jan. 12, 1959, a 29-year-old boxer, incredible line-worker and song-writer named Berry Gordy Jr. used an R&B; family loan to start a record company in Detroit. On Motown's 50th anniversary, the Associated Press asked people from the worlds of music and beyond to talk about how the legendary Detroit musical assem- sound's sound, style, savvy and soul:

RUSHES

y have stood the test of time.

'Perfect host'

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-AFP

Motown's impact

DETROIT—On Jan. 12, 1959, a 29-year-old boxer, incredible line-worker and song-writer named Berry Gordy Jr. used an R&B; family loan to start a record company in Detroit. On Motown's 50th anniversary, the Associated Press asked people from the worlds of music and beyond to talk about how the legendary Detroit musical assem- sound's sound, style, savvy and soul:

RUSHES

y have stood the test of time.

"The thing that it took me two hour 45 minutes to get from that 800 bucks and start with nothing."—Bill Clinton, former US president

"Berry Gordy—people think of him as an entrepreneur, but he's a songwriter at heart, what I mean total music ... A guy has the brilliance to understand that it starts with good songs."—Smokey Robinson R&B singer

"I don't know if anybody ever sat down and looked at the percentages of acts that were actually signed, recorded and released, and the percentages of hits versus failures. But he knew that he just found entertainment.

"He has the ears of a genius."—Diana Ross, former guitarist of the Eagles and co-writer of "Hotel California"

"You had unusually gifted engineers and producers that didn't let technical expertise interfere with emotion ... It just sounded good."—Ted Nugent, rock guitarist and singer

"It was the first, I think, black-owned company that was able to make the transition ... to be a world music industry ..."—Jimmy Glover, actor and activist

"Post-council just as relevant ... Everybody in the whole wide world has been influenced by [Motor] and the Motown sound."—Dolly Parton, country singer, songwriter and actress -AP

New girl in Nyoy Volante's life

IS "SURVIVOR PHILIPPINES" CASTaway Jef Gaitan the new girl in Nyoy Volante's life after Mine?

"Entertainment we are having problems," Nyoy sighs. "But we are sorting things out. The past few weeks have been a big adjustment. As soon as we've settled everything, of course I'll be more than happy to announce that I have found love again."

In the meantime, Nyoy will keep singing all it stops burning. While music you find no pain.

'Girlfriend-cy'?

Could it be true that Ina Make was ordering her boyfriend around during a GMA 7 show in Davao? Was she just having one of her bad moods or is she the "girlfriend-cy" type?

Love-hate relationship

Dashing celebrity athlete Phil Younghusband would like to set the record straight about the state of his relationship with his estranged wife...Joyce Ramirez.

"There has been a lot of talk swirling we have separated ways. Joyce and I have been through a lot of (about. It's a rough road, but we're still- ship. But the most important thing is we stick to each other no matter what," he explains. "The nice thing about Joyce is she's like this people- not younger stuck in the body of a female Jenny Maguire who thinks I can have Tom Cheek time or Lea Salonga's Bi-Gaptic."

All To Be "Well-bed" with pictur- less Joyce.

Guess for

A star actress was rushed to the hospital to have an emergency

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

procedure on her uterus. She was accompanied by her ex-[?].EE Did she undergo treatment because of a botched abortion in a fly-by-night clinic?

An actress brought some bush- buyer relatives to the set of their first show because they wanted to have a souvenir picture with the lead star. Just when they were about to enter the set's dressing room, they overheard him yelling to his staff, "Di ko pa nakikita ng mga pagmumukha 'to! Ayaw ng mukha ko!" In his defense said he hadn't left the studio premises. To think that one of the actress's relatives helped the lead star during his struggling days.

A disastrous couple the in- of concert producers abroad. "Is- nanayon siya ng pasahero," re- vealed another singer. "Nakasimot- ga- daw parati at mas lamig late sa- ng- ng- ng